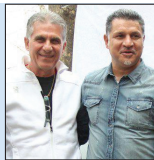




U.S. impeding sale of Iran's heavy water **2**



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Iranian photographers win awards at Paris Salon Daguerre **16**

Thousands march against Macron reforms



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Zarif: Iran to stay in nuclear deal if Europe gives 'necessary guarantees'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday that Iran will stay in the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, if Europeans give the “necessary guarantees” to protect Iran’s economic interests.

“Iran will stay in the JCPOA if its interests are met and gets necessary guarantees,”

Zarif said during a meeting with members of a parliamentary faction focusing on diplomacy and national interest.

On May 8, U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the UN-endorsed nuclear agreement and vowed to reimpose sanctions on Iran.

Zarif said that there is an “international consensus” in favor of the JCPOA which Trump cannot undermine it. **→2**

European Commission committed to continue Iran-EU co-op

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The European Commission is committed to continuing the sectorial cooperation between the EU and Iran, be it on environment, climate action or on energy, the EC said in a statement.

The withdrawal of the United States in May from the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of

Action (JCPOA), might have significant impact on the environment in Iran and raise a question as whether the European Commission will meet its environmental commitments to Iran.

After the deal was signed in 2015, European countries began to invest in different sectors in Iran, particularly, in the environment protection projects. **→12**

Shamkhani: Iran not leaving Syria

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council says the country will maintain its advisory role in Syria and continue supporting resistance groups after the U.S. demanded that Tehran put a halt to those activities.

“As long as the threat of terrorism exists in Syria and the country’s legitimate government insists on Iran’s advisory presence, we will stay in Syria,” Ali Shamkhani told Al

Jazeera Arabic in an interview broadcast on Saturday. He stressed that Iran’s presence in Syria is solely aimed at fighting terrorism at the invitation of the country’s “legitimate government.”

Last Monday U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo threatened Iran with the “strongest sanctions in history” if it did not comply with a list of steep demands, including the withdrawal of all forces under Iranian command in Syria. **→2**



PERSPECTIVE

Roohullah Ghasemian
Journalist

Washington-Brussels parallel talks over the JCPOA

Recently, French President Emmanuel Macron has taken a controversial position on the nuclear deal with Iran. On a telephone call to Hassan Rouhani, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was 48 hours after the official announcement of Trump’s withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), he stressed his commitment to the nuclear deal, and in turn, he asked Iran to be committed to the agreement. This demand was made by Emmanuel Macron: The first European politician who agreed to change the nuclear deal by including subjects such as limiting Iran’s missile capability and making Iran’s nuclear restriction permanent! He announced his agreement with these conditions in August 2017.

This was while under the deal signed in Vienna with six countries, the U.S., UK, France, Germany, Russia, China and the European Union, Iran was committed to halt its uranium enrichment program, and in exchange, international sanctions were to be lifted, allowing our country to sell oil and gas worldwide. United Nations inspectors have repeatedly confirmed Iran’s commitment the deal. Then we had the U.S. government unilaterally walking out of the nuclear deal, and Macron has since adopted a vague approach to “the JCPOA without the U.S.” This ambiguous approach, on the one hand, is the result of the French President’s attempt to restore his international reputation, and on the other hand, is due to the hidden talks between the United States and France over the JCPOA.

Today Macron is speaking of his country’s commitment to the “current version of the JCPOA”. In a joint statement issued by the European troika’s authorities we read:

It is with regret and concern that we, the Leaders of France, Germany and the United Kingdom take note of President Trump’s decision to withdraw the United States of America from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Together, we emphasize our continuing commitment to the JCPOA. This agreement remains important for our shared security. **→13**

Turkey’s presidential hopeful says he would invite Assad to Ankara

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Morteza Karimi

TEHRAN (MNA) — Dogu Perincek, the candidate in the upcoming presidential election of Turkey, told Mehr News in an interview that he sees no barrier in expanding ties between Turkey and Syria, to the point that he would invite Pres. Assad to Ankara should he become the next Turkish president.

Dogu Perincek, the Chairman of the nationalist Patriotic Party (Vatan Partisi) who is running in the upcoming presidential election of Turkey told Mehr News Agency in an interview that “there is no limitations and barrier in expanding bilateral



ties between Turkey and Syria and we should do our best to materialize this objective.”

The Turkish presidential election will be held on June 24 where 6 candidates from different

political parties will vie for the position currently held by Erdogan.

The following is an excerpt from the interview originally conducted in Turkish:

■ Would you form an alliance with opposing parties in the upcoming election?

A: Our objective in the next election is victory and Vatan Party will get along with neither the party of Recep Tayyip Erdogan nor PKK and FETÖ. We look upon this as a strategic issue because today both PKK and FETÖ are instruments manipulated by U.S. in the region. These groups are the enemies of both Turkey and the countries of the region so nobody will see us along with them. **→7**

European large firms will ignore Iran market: Pillar

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Paul Pillar, who was CIA intelligence analyst for 28 years, tells the Tehran Times that “The European governments seem determined to resist the Trump administration on this issue, but there is only so much they can do to protect their private sector from secondary U.S. sanctions.”

Pillar also says, “Parts of the European private sector already have bowed to the U.S. pressure. For many large firms doing business in the United States, the threat of penalties or exclusion from the U.S. market is just too high a price to pay to do business with Iran.”

Following is the text of the interview:

■ The U.S. violated the JCPOA. What are

the reasons behind this unilateral revocation?

A: The principal reason for Donald Trump and for many Republicans in Congress is to undo anything significant that Barack Obama accomplished. An additional set of reasons apply to many elements that have lobbied against the JCPOA from the very beginning and want to see Iran forever isolated and punished as a pariah. This latter perspective is the preference of Iran’s principal regional rivals, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Those who have fought against the JCPOA say they do not like the terms of the agreement, but the terms have never been the real reason for the opposition.

■ In regard to Trump’s violation of the Iran deal, what are the obligations and responsibilities of the deal’s other signatories?

A: Now that one party has completely and

blatantly reneged on its obligations, the other six parties are free to abandon the agreement whenever they want. However, the other six parties say they want to keep the agreement going even without the United States. Continuing obligations and responsibilities of the six may look essentially the same as what was in the JCPOA all along, although now the obligations of each party are to five other states rather than to six other states.

■ In a tactful reaction to Trump’s Betrayal of Nuclear Deal, Iran said the survival of JCPOA highly depends on firm European guarantees. Since the EU’s leverage is not strong enough to bring the U.S. back to reason, shall Iran count on their guarantees?

A: Iran will not count on anything and instead will wait to see whether expected economic benefits materialize. **→13**



© Tehran Times/ Mohammadreza Abbasi

Nasser Malakmotiei’s funeral held at Iranian House of Cinema

A fan holds a picture of legendary actor Nasser Malakmotiei during his funeral procession down Vesal Shirazi Street in Tehran on May 27, 2018.

A large number cineastes, celebrities and people from all walks of life came together at the Iranian House of Cinema located on street to bid farewell to Malakmotiei, who died at the age of 88 last Friday. He was suffering from a kidney disorder and respiratory problems.

He appeared in over 100 movies and TV series such as “Spring Variety” by Parviz Khatibi, “Baba Shamal” and “Toqi” by Ali Hatami and “Qeisar” by Masud Kimiai.

Lawmakers sign double-urgency bill to urge Rouhani government to receive assurances from EU

(FNA) — A least 50 Iranian lawmakers signed a motion to pass into law the conditions set for the European Union (EU) to ensure that Iran’s merits will be met under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The Iranian lawmakers in their bill have urged the government to condition continuing talks with the European countries to solid assurances from the EU.

According to the bill which has been signed by 50 MPs, the Iranian government should receive assurances from the EU countries that they will guarantee purchase of oil from Iran.

The motion obliges the government to obtain the following guarantees, as proposed by Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, during the course of negotiations with the remaining sides to the nuclear deal in a bid to preserve the agreement:

Europe needs to issue a resolution against the U.S. violation of Resolution 2231,

Europe must promise not to raise the issues of Iran’s missile program and regional influence,

Europe must guarantee that Iran’s oil will be sold despite U.S. undermining efforts, European banks must guarantee transactions with Iran,

Europe must counter any sanctions against Iran,

Europe must respect Iran’s right to resume any suspended nuclear activity in case any of the above conditions are not met,

U.S. withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal under the pretext that the agreement contains “flaws” as it does not address Iran’s missile program or regional influence. Iran says it will continue to remain in the JCPOA as long as the EU provides Iran with solid guarantees that the country’s economic interests will continue to be met.

After U.S. President Donald Trump’s declaration, the Iranian government issued a statement, calling the U.S. withdrawal as “unlawful”. The statement underlined Iran’s prerequisites for continuing the deal with the five world powers after the U.S. pullout of the agreement.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani felicitates Lebanon on Liberation Day

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — On Sunday, President Hassan d e s k Rouhani sent a message to his Lebanese counterpart offering congratulations on Liberation Day.

The Zionist regime was forced to pull out of southern Lebanon on May 25, 2000, after long years of resistance by Hezbollah. The date is marked as Liberation Day in Lebanese calendar.

"I offer my sincerest congratulations to your Excellency and the friend, brotherly Lebanese nation on the anniversary of liberation of southern Lebanon from the occupation of the Zionist regime," Rouhani said, the official website of the Iranian Foreign Ministry reported.

"Without a doubt, Lebanon is at the forefront of fighting the Zionist regime's greed and in doing so, coordination and unity of the golden triangle of government, army and resistance had a significant role in this great victory," he explained.



Jahangiri congratulates Russian PM on reappointment

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri on Sunday congratulated Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev on re-assuming the post of prime minister in Russia, Tasnim reported.

In his message, Jahangiri expressed confidence that during his tenure mutual cooperation between the two immediate neighbors would expand politically, economically, and culturally and the two side would consolidate interaction regionally and globally.

On May 8, Russia's lower house of parliament confirmed Medvedev as the prime minister, voting 374 against 56 in favor of him, who has held the post since 2012.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was sworn in for a new six-year term earlier in May, had put forward Medvedev to be prime minister and asked lawmakers to support his pick.



Zarif receives new British, South Korean ambassadors

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — New British and South Korean ambassadors met separately on Sunday with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and submitted copies of their credentials to him, IRNA reported.

Robert Macaire is replacing Nicholas Hopton as the new British ambassador to Tehran; Ryu Jeong-Hyun is also succeeding Kim Seung-ho as Seoul's ambassador to Tehran.

Also on Sunday, UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Pernille Dahler Kardel met with Foreign Minister Zarif.



Iran's FM starts tour of India

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was scheduled to visit India on Sunday night at the head of a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, spokesman Bahram Qassemi said earlier in the day.

According to Qassemi, Zarif's visit to India aims to discuss the condition of bilateral relations and ways to deepen them.

He will also exchange views with top Indian officials on the latest regional and international developments, the spokesman added.

Iran and India have enjoyed close relations in political, economic, energy and transit fields in recent years.

The visit is taking place after Trump withdrew the U.S. from the internationally binding nuclear agreement.



Morocco's anti- Iran accusation 'complete fabrication': source

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Morocco's accusation against Iran for facilitating weapon delivery to the Polisario Front, via Lebanese movement Hezbollah is a "complete fabrication of Moroccans," affirmed an Arab diplomat, Sahara Press Service reported, citing Le Monde.

"It is a complete fabrication of Moroccans who are able to find any pretext to refuse resuming negotiations" with the Polisario Front, said the Arab diplomat who remains anonymous, trying to explain the reasons behind the breaking-off by Morocco of its diplomatic relations with Iran.

Morocco's accusation was categorically denied by Teheran, affirming that this "affair is totally unfounded."



Italian firm: U.S. economic hegemony 'not acceptable'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Flippo Contessi, the export director of the Italian steel and iron equipment company, has said U.S. sanctions on Italy will hurt companies in Italy and other European states, noting that U.S. economic hegemony is "not acceptable".

In a recent interview with Netherlands' De Telegraaf newspaper, Contessi said the U.S. sanctions against Iran will harm all companies, IRNA reported.

In recent years Italy's engagement with Iran had been on the rise more than any other countries and the prospect for furthering "our cooperation was promising", he said.

With Trump in office "our business with Iran is declining and even blocked," Contessi added.

U.S. impeding sale of Iran's heavy water

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Behrooz d e s k Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, has said that the U.S. is impeding purchase of Iran's heavy water, however, there are certain customers who do not pay attention to the U.S.

"We sold a part of extra amount of heavy water and we have good customers. The U.S. have told certain customers to avoid purchasing our heavy water, however, there are buyers who do not pay attention to the U.S.," Kamalvandi told Fars news agency in an interview published on Sunday.

"Market of the heavy water in the world is important for us whether the JCPOA [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] exists or not. We can provide our need and sell extra amount," he added.

■ **'Iran can resume uranium enrichment to 20% purity in 2-3 days'**

Kamalvandi also said that Iran can resume enriching uranium to the purity level of 20% in matter of 2-3 days.



"All the pumps, monitors and... are ready in Fordow. It is like a car with keys on it and ready to move. Enrichment to 20% can be resumed immediately in 2-3

days," he explained.

Earlier in March, Kamalvandi said that Tehran can resume enriching uranium to the purity of 20 percent in less than a week.

Positive steps taken to preserve nuclear deal: Rouhani

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that positive steps have been taken to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, after the U.S. withdrawal.

During a meeting with clerics, he said that Iran makes efforts to remain in the JCPOA if the country's rights are upheld.

"Today, we are in a situation in which the French president [Emmanuel Macron] says in his joint conference with the Russian president [Vladimir Putin] that he supports the JCPOA. The U.S. puts Europe under pressure to choose between the U.S. and Iran, but the Europeans say that we choose the JCPOA," Rouhani stated.

Talking to reporters in St Petersburg on

Thursday, Putin and Macron supported the JCPOA.

U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of the JCPOA on May 8 and vowed to reimpose sanctions against Iran.

Since Trump's withdrawal, Iran has been seeking guarantees that its economic interests are protected otherwise it will resume nuclear activities at a greater speed.

Nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi also said in August 2017 that Iran can resume enriching uranium to 20 percent in five days if necessary.

■ **'Europeans have political will to preserve JCPOA'**

Kamalvandi also said that the Europeans have the political will to preserve the JCPOA after the U.S. withdrawal from the international agreement on May 8.

"The Europeans have shown that they have the political will but what is important is taking practical actions. We should not forget that Europe's interest are intertwined with the U.S. and they should have close ties with the U.S., but adopting independent policies is very important," he pointed out.

After the U.S. withdrawal, Iran wants assurances from the remaining parties - especially the European Union trio of Germany, Britain and France - that its interests are guaranteed or it will resume its nuclear activities with a greater speed.

Speaking at a joint news briefing at Beijing's Great Hall of the People on Thursday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang also defended the nuclear deal.

Federica Mogherini, the EU foreign policy chief, issued a statement on May 18, saying that the 28-nation bloc is united in preserving the international nuclear deal.

Iran threatens to exit nuclear deal if talks become a 'waste of time'



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi warned on Sunday that Iran would naturally leave nuclear deal negotiations with the Europeans if it deems them "unnecessarily protracted" or a "waste of time".

The remarks by Araqchi came one day before EU foreign ministers meet in Brussels to discuss policy on Iran.

Speaking to reporters, Araqchi said the Islamic Republic has not yet decided whether it would remain in the nuclear agreement or not, Mehr reported.

Iran is in talks with the European Union on the fate of the nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), after Trump pulled the U.S. out of the multilateral deal on May 8.

On Friday Araqchi held talks with political directors from the E3 (the European Union trio of Germany, France and Britain) on the JCPOA. The meeting,

held in Vienna, was chaired by Helga Schmidt, secretary general of the EU's foreign policy service.

"Deciding on this matter is subject to negotiations over the next few weeks with current members of BARJAM (a Persian acronym for the JCPOA)," Araqchi said.

Since Trump left the nuclear accord Iran has been seeking assurances that its economic interests are protected, otherwise it will resume its suspended nuclear activities.

According to Araqchi, Tehran had demanded that European signatories of the JCPOA take appropriate measures to guarantee Iran's benefits from the deal in the aftermath of U.S. withdrawal "and present their suggestions, guidelines and operational solutions with relevant assurances to Iran so that we can decide."

"We will proceed with negotiations as long as we feel the negotiations are moving in the right direction and are within Iran's time limit," the Iranian diplomat added.

Turkish envoy lauds Iran's stance after U.S. JCPOA withdrawal



After U.S. President Donald Trump declared his country's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran adopted "constructive and moderate" stances, the Turkish ambassador to Tehran said.

Reza Hakan Tekin said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency published on Sunday that "This mature way of dealing with the U.S. move perhaps shattered the dreams of some countries that had been hatching plots."

The diplomat further deplored the U.S. move to leave the JCPOA, which he called efficient, as "a wrong decision".

He added that since the deal's implementation, Iran has fully met its obligations and reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) proves this.

"The unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the international treaty, which has contributed to peace and stability in the region and the world, is not a constructive step towards serving global peace," he stated.

In a speech from the White House on May 8, U.S. President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the JCPOA, which was achieved in Vienna in 2015 after years of negotiations among Iran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany).

Following the U.S. exit, Iran and the remaining parties have launched talks to save the accord.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has underlined that any decision to keep the JCPOA running without the U.S. should be conditional on "practical guarantees" from the three European parties to the deal.

In comments on May 23, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that Europeans must protect Iranian oil sales from the U.S. pressure and continue buying Iranian crude, and must promise they would not seek new negotiations on Iran's missile program and regional activities.

(Source: Tasnim)

Shamkhani: Iran not leaving Syria

1 → Syria's Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad responded by hailing Iran's assistance to his country, stressing that the pullout of the Iranian military advisers from the Arab country was not up for discussion.

Shamkhani also dismissed other U.S. demands, including its call that Iran halt all uranium enrichment, stop its ballistic-missile program and give nuclear inspectors access to the entire country.

"Iran's missile program is completely indigenous and defensive. We will not seek permission from anyone to develop our defense power and will not hold negotiations on it," he said, according to Press TV.

"There is no logical reason to negotiate with a country that does not abide by its commitments. By leaving the JCPOA, America practically tore up the

international agreement," Shamkhani remarked.

On May 8, U.S. President Donald Trump announced Washington's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, vowing to reinstate sanctions on Tehran and impose "the highest level" of economic bans on the Islamic Republic.

Shamkhani criticized the Europeans, saying they should have "acted more firmly and decisively in condemning and stopping preliminary U.S. measures in violating the JCPOA."

"The Europeans kept silent in the lead-up to America's withdrawal from the JCPOA and this relayed somehow a message of following the United States."

He said Trump's withdrawal has brought the nuclear deal to collapse and in order to revive it the Europeans have to guarantee implementing all the

obligations they have toward Iran under the JCPOA.

The senior security official further dismissed the U.S. call for a regional coalition to stop what Trump and Pompeo have called Iran's "malign" activities, which has been welcomed by Saudi Arabia's allies in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

This coalition has been designed on the basis of deceit and its goal is to milk the wealthy Arab states in the region, Shamkhani said.

He added that Tehran has always sought to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia, albeit, "not from a position of weakness but from a position of dignity."

Shamkhani said Saudi Arabia is trying to impose its own will on the vassal rulers of the regional countries, the result of which has been the destructive war in Yemen and

the diplomatic crisis with Qatar.

Iran's strategy in the Persian Gulf, he added, is defending its territorial waters and confronting any infiltration. "Our policy has not changed. The policy of defense and countering invasion is still on track."

Shamkhani also stressed that Iran will not abandon its "principled policies" on Palestine as well as Tehran's support for the regional resistance groups against the Israeli occupation and terrorists.

"We consider defending Palestine as defending the Islamic dignity. Hamas is an organization approved by the Palestinian people," he said.

"Hezbollah and its allies recently won the first place in Lebanon's elections and Hashd al-Sha'abi was elected by the Iraqi people, being part of the country's armed forces based on a law passed by the parliament," the security chief stated.

Zarif: Iran to stay in nuclear deal if Europe gives 'necessary guarantees'

1 → After the U.S. withdrawal, Iran wants assurances from the remaining parties, especially Europeans, that its interests are guaranteed or it will resume nuclear activities with a higher speed.

On Wednesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a set of demands from Europe to save the nuclear deal. He warned that Iran would restart its nuclear activities if Europe failed to act swiftly.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the JCPOA could only continue

if the Europeans fulfill these conditions including: Promising not to ask Iran about its ballistic missile program or its regional activities; guaranteeing that Iran's oil will continue to be sold; and having European banks guarantee financial transactions with Iran.

■ **'U.S. becoming more isolated after Pompeo speech'**

Pointing to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's speech against Iran on May 21, Zarif said that Pompeo's remarks just made the U.S. "more isolated".

In his speech at the Heritage Foundation, Pompeo demanded that Iran halt all uranium enrichment, stop its ballistic-missile program and give nuclear inspectors access to the entire country.

He said that the U.S. will apply economic and military pressure against Iran and will impose "the strongest sanctions in history" on the Islamic Republic.

Analysts have said demands by Pompeo are at odds with reality.

North Korean leader ‘unsure if he can trust’ U.S.

North Korean leader wants a “successful” summit with the U.S. president next month, but Kim Jong-un is yet to be convinced he can actually trust Washington to hold up any potential agreement, South Korean president said Sunday.

Moon Jae-in made the remarks at a briefing following surprise border talks with Kim a day earlier, their second meeting in a month but only the fourth ever inter-Korean summit since 2000.

“Chairman Kim Jong-un once again clearly affirmed that his commitment to complete denuclearization remains firm yesterday.”

“What remains uncertain to Chairman Kim Jong-un is whether he can trust the U.S. promise to end their hostile relationship and guarantee North Korea’s security once the North denuclearizes,” Moon said in comments carried by Yonhap News Agency.

The Korean leaders already agreed to pursue peace and denuclearization during their breakthrough April 27 summit, which had come within months of intense aggressive rhetoric between Pyongyang and Washington.

But the planned Trump-Kim talks on June 12 in Singapore almost fell apart last week when the North’s regime returned to threats of war, apparently due to a disagreement with the U.S. over the latter’s insistence on Pyongyang’s complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

A further conciliatory statement from the North Friday led Trump to reverse his public cancellation of the scheduled Singapore summit just a day earlier.

Yet Moon warned that North Korea and the U.S. must still find some common ground.

“I believe whether the June 12 North Korea-U.S. summit will be disrupted or succeed depends on how successfully [the North and the U.S.] complete their working-level negotiations,” Moon was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, Pyongyang’s official media outlets were filled Sunday with coverage of the latest inter-Korean talks, seemingly demonstrating the North’s desire to drum up local enthusiasm.

North Korea’s state-run KCNA news agency reported that Kim “expressed his fixed will” on what would be an unprecedented meeting between a leader of his country and an American president.

■ China says hopes Trump-Kim summit can happen as planned

China’s Foreign Ministry said on Sunday it hoped a summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, originally set for Singapore next month, could happen as planned and be successful.

Direct dialogue between the leaders of the United States and North Korea is crucial to resolving the nuclear issue, the ministry said in a statement sent to Reuters.

■ Trump shifts stance on Korea summit from ‘off’ to ‘maybe’

U.S. President Donald Trump says “everybody plays games” as he’s suggesting the summit with North Korea that he suddenly called off might get back on track, rekindling hopes of progress toward halting the North’s nuclear weapons development

Trump welcomed the North’s conciliatory response to his Thursday letter withdrawing from the June 12 meeting in Singapore with Kim Jong Un. Trump said Friday it was even possible the meeting could take place on the originally



planned date.

“They very much want to do it; we’d like to do it,” he said.

Trump later tweeted that the two countries were “having very productive talks.” He wrote that the summit, “if it does happen, will likely remain in Singapore on the same date.”

The White House said Saturday that a team is heading to Singapore this weekend as previously planned to work on logistics for the summit should it take place.

White House officials noted that Trump had left the door open with a letter to Kim that blamed “tremendous anger and open hostility” by Pyongyang but also urged Kim to call him.

By Friday, North Korea issued a statement saying it was still “willing to give the U.S. time and opportunities” to reconsider talks “at any time, at any format.” Trump rapidly tweeted that the statement was “very good news” and told reporters that “we’re talking to them now.”

Trump views the meeting as a legacy-defining opportunity and has relished the press attention and the speculation about a possible Nobel Peace Prize. He made a quick decision to accept the meeting in March, over the concerns of many top aides, and has remained committed, even amid rising concerns about the challenges he faces in scoring a positive agreement.

Asked Friday if the North Koreans were playing games with their communications, Trump responded: “Everybody plays games. You know that better than anybody.”

He did not detail the nature of the new U.S. communication with the North. At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said “diplomats are still at work on the summit, possibility of a summit, so that is very good news.” He characterized the recent back-and-forth as the “usual give and take.”

The U.S. and North Korea do not have formal diplomatic relations, complicating the task of communicating between the two governments. Under the Trump administration, the CIA, where now-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo served as director, has taken an unusually prominent role in back-chan-

nel negotiations.

Pompeo last year assembled a working group at the CIA called the Korea Mission Center, which gradually assumed the lead role in talks with the North Koreans, and the group’s director, a retired senior CIA official with deep experience in the region, became the main U.S. interlocutor with Pyongyang.

The group did not supplant the State Department’s traditional mode of communication with the North, which is known as the “New York Channel” and involves U.S. diplomats and their North Korean counterparts posted to the United Nations. But it did play the major role in organizing Pompeo’s two trips to Pyongyang, once as CIA director and once as secretary of state.

Trump, in his letter to Kim, objected specifically to a statement from a top North Korean Foreign Ministry official. That statement referred to Vice President Mike Pence as a “political dummy” for his comments on the North and said it was up to the Americans whether they would “meet us at a meeting room or encounter us at nuclear-to-nuclear showdown.”

Trump then said from the White House that a “maximum pressure campaign” of economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation would continue against North Korea - with which the U.S. is technically still at war - though he added that it was possible the summit could still take place at some point.

U.S. defense and intelligence officials have repeatedly assessed the North to be on the threshold of having the capability to strike anywhere in the continental U.S. with a nuclear-tipped missile - a capacity that Trump and other U.S. officials have said they would not tolerate.

Trump, speaking Friday to graduates at the U.S. Naval Academy, did not mention North Korea directly, but he stressed the United States’ military might.

He said, “The best way to prevent war is to be fully prepared for war.”

(Source: agencies)

Qatar bans goods from UAE, Saudi, Bahrain as embargo anniversary approaches

Qatar said it was banning products originating from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain, almost a year after those states imposed an embargo on Doha, accusing it of supporting terrorism.

“Products originating from the blockading states, which as a result of the blockade cannot pass the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council Customs Territory, have to undergo proper import inspections and customs procedures,” a government statement said late on Saturday.

“To protect the safety of consumers in the State of Qatar and to combat improper trafficking of goods, the government issued a directive to find new suppliers of the variety of goods impacted.”

The national Al Watan newspaper quoted a circular from the Ministry of Economy and Commerce telling traders and shops to stop dealing in products imported from the four countries. It said inspectors would monitor compliance with the policy.

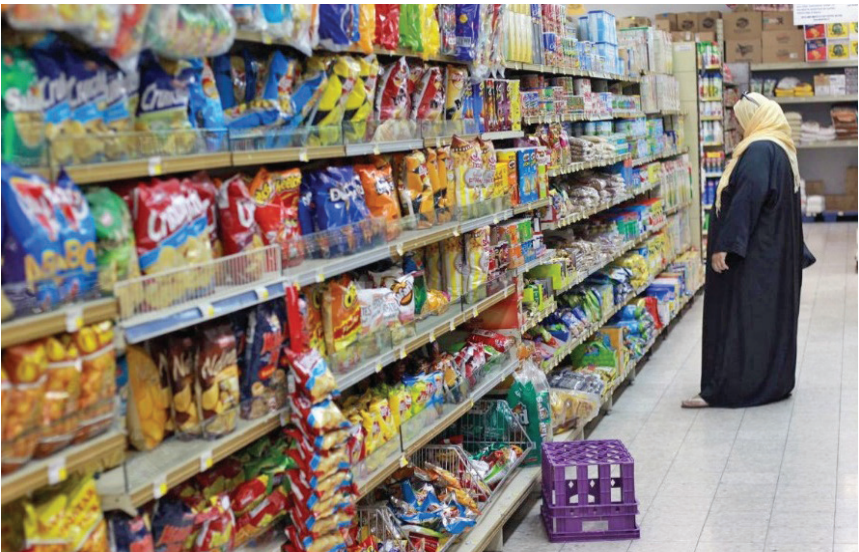
The four states cut diplomatic and transport ties last June. Qatar, which had many of its imports trans-shipped from the UAE and received the bulk of its fresh food across the Saudi border, denied the accusations against it.

Imports into Qatar plunged about 40 percent from a year earlier in the initial weeks of the boycott, but they have since mostly returned to normal as Doha has found new sources of products in countries such as Turkey, and developed new shipping routes through places such as Oman. Qatar has also launched a drive to produce more things locally, including foods.

Since last June, some foods and other products from the embargo states have continued to find their way into Qatar through third countries.

A spokesman for Qatar’s government declined to give details but said any imports coming to the country must go through proper import inspections.

He was not immediately able to give the value of the goods affected by the new measures, and whether the ban would cover all products trans-shipped through the embargo states in addition to goods produced there.



■ Bahrain: No solution in sight for diplomatic standoff with Qatar

Bahrain, one of the Saudi-led quartet of countries boycotting Qatar, says there is no solution in sight for the diplomatic crisis with Doha that has dragged on for almost a year.

“The information in our hands today does not indicate any glimmer of hope for a solution now, as the matter does not happen suddenly,” Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifah told the London-based Saudi-owned Asharq al-Awsat newspaper on Sunday.

He also accused Qatar of prolonging the dispute by taking its case to Western allies rather than the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC).

“We were expecting from the beginning of the crisis with Qatar that the emir of Qatar would go to Saudi [Arabia] but this did not happen,” the top Bahraini diplomat added.

Last June, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, and the UAE imposed a land, naval and air blockade on import-dependent Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism, an allegation strongly denied by Doha.

The Saudi-led bloc also presented Qa-

tar with a list of steep demands and gave it an ultimatum to comply with them or face consequences.

Doha, however, refused to meet the demands and stressed that it would not abandon its independent foreign policy.

On Saturday, Qatar’s Ministry of Economy and Commerce ordered shops to strip shelves of products imported from the four boycotting countries.

The order came after UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash on Friday accused Qatar of seeking “to target the security of its neighbors and support extremism and terrorism in the region.”

“I hope that a year from the boycott will produce a new thought and a wise approach in Doha,” he tweeted.

■ Persian Gulf crisis threatens East Africa peace efforts, EU warns

Diplomatic tensions between countries in the Gulf are threatening peace efforts in East Africa, particularly in the Horn of Africa, the EU’s special envoy has warned.

The crisis, which erupted nearly a year ago, has pitted Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain against Qatar, with Riyadh and

its allies accusing Doha of fostering close ties with Iran and backing extremists.

But the fallout has had direct repercussions in the Horn of Africa where it has exacerbated already-existing tensions, notably in Somalia, said Alexander Rondos, Europe’s special envoy to the region.

In particular, tensions have escalated steadily between Somalia and the United Arab Emirates, which has sought to extend its influence there as the war in Yemen rages on.

Although the two countries have been traditionally close, Mogadishu’s attempts to remain neutral over the Persian Gulf divisions have not gone down well.

One of the EU’s “most important objectives” is to make sure that East Africa “is as well protected as it can be from what is a rapidly shifting geo-political environment” in the Persian Gulf, he said on Friday following a two-day seminar of EU envoys to the region.

Political strife between Persian Gulf states and their alliances with east African players was “the biggest strategic issue because it could easily undermine all of the efforts to overcome East Africa’s own particular crises, whether it’s South Sudan or Somalia,” Rondos said.

“We don’t need something aggravating these efforts,” he added, describing the geo-political challenge as the “biggest game in town”.

In Somalia, the conflict has raised tensions between the federal states and the central government, with many unhappy about President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed’s neutral stance.

For some, there would be many economic benefits to throwing Mogadishu’s support behind Saudi Arabia or the Emirates in a development which has put pressure on already fraught internal relationships in a country already fraught with violence.

Rondos also expressed concern that the Persian Gulf crisis could exacerbate tensions between East African nations working together on efforts to solve regional crises, notably South Sudan and Burundi, as well as in Somalia.

(Source: agencies)

Thousands march in France against Macron reforms



Tens of thousands of people took to the streets across France on Saturday to protest against Emmanuel Macron’s policies, but the president said nothing would stop his economic reforms.

The marches, which organizers labelled a “popular tide”, were called by 60 unions, political parties and associations angry at Macron’s political overhauls.

However, in Paris police reported a turnout of just 21,000 while the CGT leftist union claimed 80,000 and 250,000 throughout the country.

That compared with a police count of 40,000 and the CGT’s 100,000 for the last similar protest in Paris on May 5.

Macron said Friday during a visit to Russia that the protests “won’t stop” his progress.

“I won’t preside in light of the polls or demonstrations, because we have done too much of that,” (in the past) he said.

Saturday’s marches follow strikes on Tuesday when public-sector employees from street sweepers to teachers joined rail workers in walking out over what they called an “attack” against public services.

It was the third day of stoppages and demonstrations by public workers since last year’s sweeping election win by Macron, who has pledged to reduce spending, trim jobs and overhaul large parts of the vast French state.

PCF communist party secretary general Pierre Laurent addressed the crowds, saying: “When we have power so arrogant, so authoritarian in his methods, if the country does not show its strength and unity, we will not be able to push the boundaries.”

Several dozen people were arrested at the start of the demonstration at the Place de la Bastille.

Police said some carried weapons, while others were held violent acts.

Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told AFP the authorities want to limit the activity of the ultra-leftwing blocs who attacked police and property during clashes on May 1.

“I hope that this parade will be a calm parade, where people can express their opinion. We are in a republican state and those who want to break, loot, even attack the police force, are arrested in a preventive way,” he added.

In the southern city of Marseille, left-wing leader Jean-Luc Melenchon urged protesters to form a “popular front, which the people need”.

“The hard head of Emmanuel Macron must hear this message of the people,” the Insoumis (Unbowed) party chief said.

“The country is rich, the country has to share. We’ve had enough of the same people always having everything.”

“In the name of the poor, humiliated, homeless, abandoned miners, we tell you ‘Enough!’ “ he said.

France has one of the biggest public sectors in Europe relative to the size of its economy. The country has not balanced its budget since the 1970s, leading to a public debt equivalent to nearly 100 percent of GDP.

The unions accuse Macron, a former investment banker, of wanting to destroy public services -- a vital source of employment and a pillar of communal life in many parts of the country.

(Source: AFP)

U.S. Navy warships sail near South China Sea islands



Two U.S. Navy warships have sailed near South China Sea islands, which are claimed by China, according to two U.S. officials.

The Higgins guided-missile destroyer and the Antietam, a guided-missile cruiser, came within 12 nautical miles of the Parcel Islands on Sunday, the officials told Reuters, on condition of anonymity.

The islands are among a string of islets, reefs and shoals over which China has territorial disputes with its neighboring countries.

The move is likely to anger Beijing as President Donald Trump is trying to maintain its continued cooperation on North Korea.

The military vessels conducted maneuvering operations near Tree, Lincoln, Triton and Woody islands in the Paracels, according to one of the officials.

China has repeatedly warned the United States against sending warships to patrol the South China Sea. Washington claims such operations are meant to protect “freedom of navigation” in the sea, a gateway for trillions of dollars in maritime trade each year.

China’s island-building in the South China Sea has also drawn criticism from the U.S., which accuses Beijing of undertaking a land reclamation program to build artificial islands, which could be used as military bases.

However, Beijing, which claims almost the entire South China Sea, has denied the allegations and says any military activities on the islands have been for self-defense purposes.

Washington’s military presence in the region, halfway around the world, has also led to worries about an increasing risk of accidental collisions that could spark a consequential wider conflict.

(Source: Reuters)

STOCK MARKET	
TEDPIX	95626.0
IFX	1107.34
Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir	

CURRENCIES	
USD	42,110 rials
EUR	49,109 rials
GBP	56,033 rials
AED	11,466 rials
Source: mehrnews.com	

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Export of Iran’s gas rises 60% in a year

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iran’s gas exports rose 60 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) compared to its preceding year, a director in National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) announced.

Behzad Babazadeh, the director for international affairs in NIGC, said 13.8 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas was exported in the past year, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Iran’s daily gas production stands at 850 million cubic meters (mcm) at the moment which is planned to reach 1.2 bcm by the end of the country’s Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021).

The sixth plan has also envisaged the daily exports of 200 mcm of gas, with the neighboring countries as the main export markets, according to NIGC Managing Director Hamidreza Araqi.

Instability in Italy and Spain jolts European markets

Mounting fears about political instability in Italy and Spain sent tremors through the Eurozone’s two largest peripheral debt markets on Friday with investors dumping the sovereign bonds of both countries and sending European bank shares sharply lower.

A two-week sell-off of Italian debt accelerated after the two populist parties poised to govern in Rome failed yet again to get presidential approval for a slate of ministers, with leaders divided over whether to appoint an arch-Euroscptic as finance minister.

The long-running Italian drama was unexpectedly joined by the prospect of a government collapse in Spain after the main opposition party called for vote of no-confidence in the minority rule of prime minister Mariano Rajoy, whose Centre-right Popular party has been racked by a campaign finance scandal.

Although the decision by Socialist leader Pedro Sánchez to table the confidence vote sent the main Spanish stock index down as much as 2.7 per cent and the country’s benchmark government bond yield had its largest one day move since September, most of the political and market focus remained on Italy.

“We saw in Greece how dangerous it is if a country has a bigger and bigger debt and I hope that we will not have a second Greece in our neighboring country, Italy,” Sebastian Kurz, the Austrian chancellor, told the Financial Times.

The Italian sell-off left two-year bonds yielding nearly 130 basis points more than Germany’s equivalent debt, a spread that saw its biggest one-day widening since the tail-end of the eurozone crisis in late 2013.

(Source: Financial Times)

Monthly gas condensate exports up 149% yr/yr

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran’s gas condensate exports in the second Iranian calendar month Ordibehesht (April 21-May 21) rose 149 percent from the same month of the past year, according to a customs director.

Ahmad Pour-Heidar, the director general of the customs office of Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEZ), said 1.061 million tons

of gas condensate worth \$1.091 billion was exported from the zone during the mentioned month, IRNA reported on Sunday.

The official also announced that 1.594 million tons of non-oil products worth \$753.6 million were exported from PSEEZ in the second month of this year, showing 19 percent and 11 percent growth in value and weight, respectively, from the same month of the past year.



Pour-Heidar mentioned China, Japan, South Korea, India, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait as the main export destinations of the products.

PSEEZ is an energy hub in Iran’s southwestern Bushehr Province with 105 kilometers distance from South Pars gas field, a huge field Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

Russian giant mining co. ready to commence co-op with Iran

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN** — Ural Mining and Metallurgical Company (UMMC), one of the top Russian producers of major minerals including copper, zinc, coal, gold and silver, has voiced readiness to cooperate with Iran on various mining and mineral industries sector.

According to the Sunday report of the public relations office of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), in a meeting with IMIDRO Head Mehdi Kar-

basian, the Russian company’s Deputy General Director Sergo-Shakhzada Kurbanov said that “regarding the wide range of UMMC’s activities, a proper bed is set for mutual cooperation with Iran on mining and mineral industries.”

Referring to his familiarity with some of Iran’s mining products including copper via some European major companies, Kurbanov, who is a main UMMC shareholder, added that his company can commence cooperation with Iran in various mining sectors.

Non-oil trade balance close to \$1b in 2 months

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN** — Iran’s non-oil trade with other countries registered a \$942 million positive balance in the two-month period from March 21 to May 21, Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday citing the data offered by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

As reported, the country exported \$7.739 billion of non-oil products and imported \$6.797 billion of non-oil goods during the mentioned period of time.

Non-oil exports indicated 22-percent

growth and non-oil imports showed 0.49-percent rise in the two-month period of this year compared to the same time span of the past year.

The value of Iran’s non-oil exports reached \$46.931 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), with 6.56 percent growth from \$44.42 billion in its previous year.

The country’s imports of the non-oil products during the past calendar year stood at \$54.302 billion, indicating 24.31 percent increase year on year.

Small German banks aim to keep Iran ties

Germany’s biggest lenders have shied away from business with Iran after past penalties for breaching U.S. sanctions, but smaller banks have leapt on opportunities afforded by the nuclear deal rejected by U.S. President Donald Trump.

There are just months to go until a November deadline issued by Washington after the U.S. president abandoned a hard-fought agreement that loosened business restrictions on the Islamic republic in exchange for Tehran giving up its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

But some firms plan to press on in their dealings with Iran despite the looming threat of penalties.

“We will continue to serve our clients,” for now, said Patrizia Melfi, a director at the “international competence

center” (KCI) founded by six cooperative savings banks in the small town of Tuttingen in southwest Germany.

The center, which supports companies operating in sensitive markets like Iran or Sudan, has seen demand “rising sharply in the last few years, from firms listed on the Dax [Germany’s index of blue-chip firms], from all over Germany and from Switzerland,” she added.

German exports to Iran have grown since the nuclear deal was signed in 2015, adding 15.5 percent last year to reach almost €2.6 billion (\$3.0 billion) after 22-percent growth in 2016.

Such figures remain vanishingly small compared with Germany’s €111.5 billion in exports to the United

States — its top customer.

Nevertheless, the KCI will “wait and see what the sanctions look like” before turning away from Iran, Melfi said.

Already, firms dealing with Tehran must take great care not to fall foul of U.S. restrictions.

Transactions are carried out in euros, and the KCI does not deal with businesses that have American citizens or green card resident holders on their boards.

What’s more, products sold to Iran cannot contain more than 10 percent of parts manufactured in the United States.

(Source: AFP)

ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to purchase 60,000 M/Ts 10 pct M/L, crude degummed soybean oil (in 2 separate cargoes of 30,000 MTs 10% for shipment during September 2018 and October 2018) through single stage international tender.

All of qualified companies and suppliers that are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from **28/05/2018** until **09/06/2018** from the secretary of Trades &Tenders committee located on the 4th Floor of GTC Building No. 2, Fatmei Ave. (opposite of Water and Wastewater Co.), Tehran, Iran along with an official letter of introduction.

The bid participants are required to submit their stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest at **13:00** (Tehran time) on **10/07/2018** to the Secretariat of Tenders’ Committee located on the 7th Floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on **10/07/2018** at **14:30** (Tehran time) with the presence of bidder’s representatives in Tenders’ Committee (2nd floor of GTC building No. 2, Fatmei Ave. (opposite of Water and Wastewater Co.), Tehran, Iran).

Bid bond: the bid bond worth EUR 339,574 (IRR. 17,318,290,000) for one cargo of 30,000 Mts.

Bid bonds may be deposited either in cash or through unconditional bank guarantee with three-month validity and extendible for another three months.

Note: participates who wish to bid for more than one cargo are obliged to deposit the above mentioned bid bond for each extra shipment.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.gtc-portal.com or contact us by Phone No. 00982188957477 (Foreign Trade Department)

First Announcement

SINGLE- STAGE INTERNATIONAL TENDER

GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to purchase 30,000 M/Ts 10 pct M/L RBD palm oil through single stage international tender.

All of qualified companies and suppliers that are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from **28/05/2018** until**09/06/2018** from the secretary of Trades &Tenders committee located on the 4th floor of GTC Building No. 2, Fatmei Ave. (opposite of Water and Wastewater Co.), Iran, Tehran along with an official letter of introduction.

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Bid bond: the bid bond worth EUR310,534 (IRR15,837,250,000) in cash or unconditional bank guarantee with three-month validity and extendible for another three months.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.gtc-portal.com or contact us by Phone No. 00982188957477 (Foreign Trade Department)

First Announcement

SINGLE- STAGE INTERNATIONAL TENDER

GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN

Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to purchase 60,000 M/Ts 10 pct M/L raw sugar on CFR basis, through single stage international tender.

All qualified companies and suppliers who are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from **28.05.2018** till**09.06.2018** from Trades & Tenders Committee located on the 4th floor of GTC Building No. 2, at No 225 Fatemi Avenue, Tehran-Iran along with an official letter of introduction.

The bidders are required to submit stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest by 13:00 on 10.07.2018 to the Tender secretariat located on the 7th Floor No.12, Dr. Fatemi Square, Tehran, Iran.

The bid’s envelope will be opened at **15:00** on **10.07.2018** in the presents of the bidder’s representative in GTC’s meeting’s hall. (2th Floor, No. 225, Fatemi Avenue, Tehran-Iran).

Bid bond: bid bond worth EUR 283,804 (IRR 14,474,020,000).

Bid bonds may be deposited either cash in Rials or through an unconditional bank guarantee issued in Euros by renowned Iranian bank located in Tehran, with three-month validity and extendible for another three months.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.gtc-portal.com or contact us by Phone No. 00982188957477 (Foreign Trade Department)

Saudi-Russia oil policy shift sets stage for tense OPEC meeting

When Saudi Arabia and Russia announced a new policy to revive oil production last week, one thing was missing: most of the other partners in their grand coalition.

With oil supplies tightening and prices soaring, the two countries agreed to restore some of the output they halted as part of an accord with 22 other producers, drawn from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and beyond. The trouble is, most of those nations weren't consulted and several may have cause to object to the proposal when they meet in Vienna next month.

"It might be a contentious meeting," said Ed Morse, head of commodities research at Citigroup Inc. in New York.

The matter is particularly sensitive because Russia and the Saudis are proposing raising production to make up for losses from other members, notably a worsening slump in Venezuelan supply and a potential drop in Iran as renewed U.S. sanctions kick in. Those countries have nothing to gain from looser output caps, and plenty to lose if oil prices extend Friday's steep decline.

Suhail Al Mazrouei, United Arab Emirates energy minister and current holder of OPEC's rotating presidency, said the group as a whole will decide whether to adjust output.

"No decisions made by two countries or three countries are going to be taken," he said in an interview in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Friday after meeting with his Saudi and Russian counterparts. "We respect all the member countries."

Saudi Arabia and Russia could simply go ahead with their plan without the blessing



of their cohorts. Because they're the only countries capable of increasing production significantly, the impact on the market would be almost as great if they chose to go it alone.

"If the rest are not on board, Saudi will do it alone, so it's not much of a choice," said Roger Diwan, an analyst at consultant IHS Markit Ltd. in Washington.

Yet the success of the 24-nation alliance that agreed the supply cuts seems to be valuable to the kingdom, and so they may prefer a more diplomatic route by seeking consensus. If so, it would be a tough sell.

Winners, losers

Though they're not always enforced,

OPEC's rules do require policy changes be approved by all members -- many of which would lose out in this case. Outside the Arab members in the Persian Gulf, most countries aren't able to boost supplies and would face lower revenue if prices slide further.

U.S. oil futures had fallen as much as 4.6 percent to \$67.49 a barrel as of 1:44 p.m. in New York on Friday. That's the biggest drop in almost a year, erasing most of the gains for May.

In Venezuela, which lobbied hard to set up the 2016 accord, output has plunged to the lowest level since the 1950s as a spiraling economic crisis batters its oil industry.

Losing further earnings could accelerate its financial collapse.

Iran faces the prospect of losing customers to its rival as renewed U.S. sanctions -- imposed after President Donald Trump quit an agreement on the country's nuclear program -- force buyers to reduce purchases.

Different scenarios

Ending deeper cuts by individual members would barely boost supply, while moving the group back to 100 percent compliance in aggregate would add more than 700,000 b/d. Terminating the deal would increase output by about 1.3 million b/d.

It could be that the production increases aren't substantial enough to need much consultation within the group, according to Helima Croft, chief commodities analyst at RBC Capital Markets LLC. The lower end of the range the producers are discussing -- a return to levels agreed at the outset of the deal -- is just a few hundred thousand barrels a day above current output.

If history is any guide, OPEC's other members will eventually line up behind Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih. In June 2011, countries like Iran opposed the kingdom's push to increase the organization's production quota. At the group's next meeting six months later, the Saudi proposal was adopted.

"I strongly believe that we will find a compromise, because all countries are interested in a stable market," Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said in a Bloomberg television interview in St. Petersburg on Friday. (Source: Bloomberg)

Solar power to become world's 4th largest electric power capacity

Frost & Sullivan's recent analysis Global Power Industry Outlook, 2018, posits that solar will surpass wind in global energy capacity starting in 2020, making it the fourth largest source of energy generation behind coal, gas and hydro. Less than a year ago, solar surpassed nuclear energy to reach 5th place.

The report says increased battery energy storage capabilities, surges in merger and acquisition activities, and disruptive energy start-ups are the primary reasons the renewable energy sector is seeing this surge -- and solar has, so far, been the primary beneficiary of this energy capacity expansion.

The report also predicts that \$2.2 trillion will be invested in new energy capacity through 2021, including more than

\$600 billion in the solar sector alone.

"To navigate through current trends and challenges, organizations must start embracing business models that enhance operational and process efficiency while reducing costs," said Vasanth Krishnan, Energy & Environment Analyst at Frost & Sullivan. "Adopting disruptive digital solutions that focus on consumer needs will bring the organization closer to technological and efficiency transformation."

The report also highlights several other global energy sector trends, including:

The 3D's of Power -- Decarbonization, Decentralization, Digitalization -- continue to be underlying factors determining

the global power market landscape;

The residential battery storage market will be the fastest growing in 2018 driven largely by the surge in the behind-the-meter residential deployments in the US, Germany, and Australia;

"Analyzing long-term scenarios and defining positioning strategies should be key focus areas for industry participants in the long term," noted Krishnan. "Also, as the renewable and distributed energy markets mature, a large installed capacity of equipment will need to be serviced, offering attractive growth prospects within the operations and maintenance sector."

(Source: cleantechnica.com)

Oil output could return to October 2016 level, says Russia's Novak

A return to the oil production levels that were in place in October 2016, baseline for the current deal to cut output, is one of the options for easing curbs, Russia's energy minister said on Saturday.



Sources said this week that Saudi Arabia and Russia were discussing raising OPEC and non-OPEC oil production to ease 17 months of strict supply curbs amid concerns that a price rally has gone too far.

"When we extended the agreement until the end of 2018, we spoke about such possibilities (of returning to the October 2016 level)," Novak told reporters.

"But a decision will be made in June," he added, referring to meetings of OPEC and non-OPEC countries in Vienna on June 22-23.

The existing deal came into force on January 1, 2017, and envisaged global oil producers reducing their combined output by 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) to cut bloated stockpiles and prop up oil prices.

Russia's oil output reached a 30-year high of 11.247 million bpd in October 2016 and it pledged to cut it by 300,000 bpd to 10.947 million.

In March and in April this year it failed to fully comply with the deal, pumping at the pace of 10.97 million bpd, an 11-month high.

Oil prices have risen to \$80 per barrel, levels unseen since late 2014. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that the price of \$60 "suits Russia".

Novak was also quoted as saying on Saturday he expected Iran to reduce its output by no more than 10 percent as a result of the move by the United States to withdraw from a nuclear deal and reinstate sanctions against Tehran.

"I think the output reduction will not be as significant as many expect," RIA news agency quoted Novak as saying when asked if he agreed with an estimate that the sanctions could remove as much as 800,000 barrels a day from the market.

"Some 10 percent is probably the maximum level," he said.

Novak also estimated that the "geopolitical risk" premium to the oil price was around \$5-\$7 per barrel.

(Source: Reuters)

Elegance is an attitude



Andre Agassi



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Trump is a con man for the super rich — Democrats must expose him

By Robert Reich

Trump's strategy for keeping power is to build up his coalition of America's white working class and the nation's ownership class.

It's a curious coalition, to say the least. But if Democrats don't respond to it, it could protect Trump from impeachment and even re-elect him. It just might create a permanent Republican majority around an axis of white resentment and great wealth.

Two decades ago, Democrats and Republicans competed over the middle class. They battled over soccer moms and suburban "swing" voters.

Since then the middle class has shrunk while the working class has grown, and vast wealth has been accumulated by a comparative few who now own a large portion of America. Some of their wealth has taken over American politics.

Enter Trump.



Counties whose voters shifted from Obama to Trump in 2016 had lost economic ground to the rest of America, even more than did solidly-Republican counties. Trump is counting on the unwavering support of these mostly white working class voters.

Meanwhile, much of the ownership class has come over to Trump. He's counting on it to bankroll Republican politicians who are loyal to him.

Since becoming president, Trump has sought to reward both sides of this coalition — tossing boatloads of money to the ownership class, and red meat to the white working class.

One boatload is the corporate and individual tax cut, of which America's richest 1 percent will take home an estimated 82 percent by 2027, according to the Tax Policy Center.

Another boatload is coming from government itself, which Trump has filled with lobbyists who are letting large corporations do whatever they want — using public lands, polluting, defrauding consumers and investors, even employing children — in order to push profits even higher.

Trump's red meat for the white working class is initiatives and tirades against unauthorized immigrants and foreign traders — as if they're responsible for the working class's lost ground — and other symbolic gestures of economic populism, along with episodic racist outbursts, and support for guns and evangelicals.

Every time Trump sends more money to the wealthy he sends more red meat to his base.

Weeks ago, after announcing he'd seek another big tax cut before the midterm elections — "phase two," as he termed it — he threatened China with a trade war; arranged another crackdown on unauthorized immigrants, including a carefully-choreographed plan to break up families at the border and attack sanctuary cities; and vowed to go after pharmaceutical companies.

Yet red meat goes only so far. At some point, you'd think, the white working class would realize that the only real beneficiaries of the Trump coalition are the super-rich.

Trump's clampdown on foreign imports and immigrants won't raise working-class wages. It's more likely to erode their

Trump's red meat for the white working class is initiatives and tirades against unauthorized immigrants and foreign traders — as if they're responsible for the working class's lost ground — and other symbolic gestures of economic populism, along with episodic racist outbursts, and support for guns and evangelicals.

paychecks because it will cause consumer prices to rise. Yet it leaves American multinational corporations unscathed. They don't make their money off trade and don't rely on immigrants; they fabricate and sell from all over the world. If a trade war with China breaks out, they'll merely shift their sourcing to other nations.

His tax cut put a few dollars in working-class pockets but is already requiring cuts in services they rely on, and will demand more.

His plan to bring down drug prices won't make drugs any cheaper. Instead, it's a big win for drug companies whose prices won't be controlled and won't have to negotiate with Medicare and Medicaid.

Trump doesn't want his base to know that the only way they can permanently become better off is by reining in the ownership class.

He doesn't want them to recall that the ownership class is largely responsible for hollowing out the middle class. For decades the captains of American industry, backed by the nation's biggest investors, have squeezed payrolls by outsourcing abroad, cutting or eliminating job benefits, busting unions, and shifting to part-time and contract work.

He'd rather they didn't see that corporate profits — flowing into higher executive pay and higher share prices — have constituted a steadily larger portion of economy, while wages have been a steadily lower portion. Most economic gains have gone to the top. We have had socialism for the rich and harsher capitalism for everyone else.

If Democrats were smart they would expose all this — and commit themselves to reversing these trends by creating a multi-racial coalition of the poor, working class, and what's left of the middle.

Trump's curious coalition endures only because he's a clever salesman and conman. The only way it can possibly succeed at entrenching Trump is if Democrats say and do little or nothing.

(Source: *Newsweek*)

Is the U.S. bringing Europe and Russia closer together?

Washington's withdrawal from the Iran deal gives Moscow and Brussels rare common ground

By Yasmeen Serhan

Nearly one year after hosting Russian President Vladimir Putin at Versailles, French President Emmanuel Macron went to St. Petersburg. The French leader, who is addressing the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum Friday, held direct talks with his Russian counterpart Thursday, during which the two discussed the crisis in Ukraine, the war in Syria, and, perhaps most pressingly, how to salvage the Iran nuclear deal both France and Russia are party to.

Such a visit would have been awkward just two months ago. At that time, tensions between Moscow and Europe had reached Cold War-era heights after a former Russian spy was poisoned with a rare nerve agent on British soil — the kind of attack the UK and its allies alleged only Russia could have pulled off, despite repeated denials from Moscow.

The row ultimately resulted in the expulsion of more than 100 Russian diplomats from capitals across Europe and North America. Russia issued tit-for-tat expulsions in response.

But that was then—this is now. President Trump's recent decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as the Iran deal is formally known, has put Europe between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, it could resign itself to watching its signature diplomatic achievement crumble. On the other, it could attempt to salvage the deal, even if it means exposing its businesses to U.S. sanctions. So far, European leaders appear to have opted for the latter, committing themselves to maintaining the agreement, even if it means doing so without Washington. "As long as the Iranians respect their commitments, the EU will of course stick to the agreement of which it was an architect," European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said last week, adding that the bloc will "do what we can to protect our European businesses" from U.S. sanctions penalizing companies that do business with Iran. This includes introducing regulations that would prevent European companies from



“Russia will exploit as much as possible this narrative that the United States is not respecting its international engagements,” Boulègue, a research fellow at the London-based Chatham House , says.

complying with the sanctions (but as my colleague Krishnadev Calamur points out, it's not entirely clear how effective they will be).

Tehran has already raised alarm this week over European firms pulling back business from Iran, making Macron and Putin's meeting all the more crucial. As one of the six remaining signatories to the deal (China, France, Germany, the U., and Iran are the others), Russia shares the EU's goal of keeping the nuclear agreement alive. "We have never supported the policy of unilateral sanctions and will never do that as we believe them to be illegal," Maria Zakharova, Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson, said on Wednesday in apparent reference to the reimposition of

U.S. sanctions on Iran. "We are determined to advance our comprehensive cooperation with Iran."

Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Iran deal adds another crack in the relationship between Washington and its European allies —after those caused by the U.S.'s withdrawal last year from the Paris climate accord and Trump's more recent threat to impose steep aluminum and steel tariffs on the European Union (waivers for which expire next week). These diplomatic fissures have prompted some to question the durability of the trans-Atlantic relationship. On Iran, at least, there's a risk of Europe drifting further from the U.S. and closer to Russia.

Though Europe and Russia now find themselves on the same side of the Iran deal issue — opposite the U.S. — it's still a far cry from complete rapprochement. "It's short-term, circumstantial community of interest," Mathieu Boulègue, a research fellow focusing on Russia and Eurasia at the London-based Chatham House, told me. Not only have Europe and Russia backed opposing sides in the ongoing war in Syria, but Europe also, along with the U.S., continues to impose heavy sanctions on Moscow over its annexation of Crimea in 2014.

And Macron has been vocal about these differences. During his and Putin's first meeting in Versailles last year, he famously took the opportunity to deride Russian state media outlets Russia Today and Sputnik as "agents of influence and propaganda."

But Boulègue said these differences shouldn't compromise Russian-European cooperation when it comes to Iran. "This is the core of diplomacy," he said, adding: "It's not because you're not friends on one issue that you cannot be friends on another."

In a joint press conference following their meeting Thursday, Macron put the emphasis on France and Russia's mutual interests, as well as their historic and cultural ties. "We are quite aware that we have allowed some misunderstanding of our mutual relationships," Macron said, adding that both sides should move forward together and "keep working on strengthening our mutual trust."

Despite their differences, they do have another important thing in common: A willingness to stand up to — or, depending on your perspective, stick it to — the United States. "Russia will exploit as much as possible this narrative that the United States is not respecting its international engagements," Boulègue said. "It will be presented as a victory and this will allow Russia to have an upper hand in any future negotiations with regards to Iran, and that is directly linked to Syria because Iran is indeed a key player in any sort of peace settlement in Syria. ... Russia will definitely capitalize on that."

(Source: *The Atlantic*)

Saudi House of cards: Why Mohammad bin Salman sees rivals everywhere

Saudi Arabia's crown prince is determined to eliminate dissent before it becomes too political

By Madawi Al-Rasheed

Three waves of detentions reflect Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman's increasing paranoia. He seems unable to distinguish between friend and foe. Despite having reached the threshold of consensus with regards to his ascension to the throne, MBS is behaving as if his position is anything but assured.

■ Feeling insecure

These detention campaigns can be seen as a sign of insecurity, a tactic of repression, or as a popular mobilization strategy to ensure agreement over his policies and style of leadership, not to mention his own legitimacy as the rightful heir to the throne.

But each one of the detention campaigns target individuals in ways that seem to perpetuate an ongoing saga, namely the Saudi game of thrones. In turn, this highlights MBS's inability to focus on developing the economic vision he talked up on becoming crown prince. The detentions reflect a sinister desire to consolidate power by repression rather than consensus.

First, a cohort of Islamists of varying shades were targeted in September 2017. They were all accused of promoting radical Islam at a time when the crown prince wanted to move Saudi Arabia to a more moderate faith. Among the detained were famous religious scholars, intellectuals and even economists and entrepreneurs.

They did not have radicalization in common. What united them as a group was their reluctance to either applaud the prince's economic vision. It was also simply that they were critical of the policies of King Salman and his son.

They are prisoners of conscience rather than traitors, as the regime depicted them immediately after their arrests. Sheikhs Salman al-Odah and Awad al-Qarni were among the first to be detained. They were followed by economists such as Essam al-Zamil, alongside many academics, journalists and poets.

■ A rolling wave of arrests

The ready-made accusation of belonging to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood organization was used to justify the arrests. Added to this, "communication with foreign entities" became a cliché to be repeated in the next wave of arrests, used to eliminate all manner of critical voices, from radical terrorists to constitutional monarchy Islamists and economic entrepreneurs.

The second wave of arrests was more spectacular, as the personalities detained and the venue of arrest were both unusual. In November 2017, princes such as Miteb bin Abdullah, head of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, tycoon Waleed bin Talal, and many others among the economic and administrative elite were rounded up and detained at the five-star Ritz-Carlton in Riyadh.

Their arrest was described as an anti-corruption drive to rid Saudi Arabia of those who plundered its wealth in a previous era. With no open trials and evidence against the detained made public, and with ransom money paid by several prisoners weeks later, the official narrative was hard to swallow.

It was more like a deliberate measure to purge the crown prince's rivals among his own cousins and punish those wealthy individuals, depriving them of large chunks of their portfolios at a time when funds were needed to finance many projects.

But the more populist, anti-corruption narrative appealed to many Saudis who had been victims of corruption, especially



when the big sharks used their position in government or privileges to plunder wealth.

■ A blast from the past

Saudis were ready to believe the narrative and praise the crown prince for targeting even his own relatives in the anti-corruption campaign. Then on 12 May came the unexpected news of the detention and deportation from Kuwait to Saudi Arabia of a young member of the Al-Rasheed family, which ruled the Emirate of Ha'il in the north of present-day Saudi Arabia, and was defeated by the al-Saudi in 1921.

It sounded like a blast from the past.

My cousin, 29-year-old Nawaf al-Rasheed, is the son of Talal, a famous poet who was assassinated in dubious circumstances in Algeria while on a hunting trip in 2003. Nawaf's father Talal was not only a famous poet but was a literary figure whose fame spread across the Persian Gulf and beyond. His Nabati poetry (poetry in the Arabian vernacular, sometimes known as "Bedouin poetry") inflamed the imaginations of many who understood its subtleties and references to the distant past.

He is a grandson of Abdulaziz, who ruled in Ha'il at the turn of the 20th century. So young Nawaf had the burden of history to carry and the curse of the name and genealogy, which is said to send shivers down the al-Saud spine. Since the assassination of his father, Nawaf moved to live with his Qatari mother and acquired Qatari nationality.

Nawaf was invited by the Shammar of Kuwait for poetry recitals. Over three days, poetry was recited, sheep were slaughtered and sword dances were performed.

The excessive tribal hospitality in honor of Nawaf has to be understood in the context of the position of such tribes like the Shammar in the land of the Al-Sabah. Perhaps they were sending subtle messages to their leader, proving that they are still important and that they can amass support and show tribal solidarity.

Given that many Shammar in Kuwait are Bidouns, stateless or being denied Kuwaiti citizenship despite their presence there for generations, the tribe staged a theatrical performance to send specific messages. Nonetheless, several Shammar individuals are full Kuwaiti citizens who participate in elections and win parliamentary seats.

■ A purge of history

Unfortunately, Nawaf was used by many groups for their own purposes. The Saudis asked for him to be handed over and Kuwait obliged. Citing the PGCC Joint Security Agreement signed by all member states, the ministry of interior announced that it sent Nawaf to Saudi Arabia, where he

was then detained.

He had entered Kuwait on a Qatari passport but this did not help him. The vague Kuwaiti statement reflected the outreach of Saudi Arabia and its influence there. Qatar, on the other hand, wanted to keep a window of opportunity in Kuwait, which refused to take sides in the Qatari-Saudi conflict and tried to mediate, albeit unsuccessfully.

No official Qatari statement was made and only a Qatari human rights organization was critical of Kuwait's actions.

The arrest of an innocent and unpoliticised young member of the Al-Rasheed family, whose name is associated with a bygone historical era, is a purging of history. The crown prince was perhaps afraid that Qatar would succeed in reinventing an alternative leadership and a new era of tribal claims and counter-claims.

Saudi Arabia itself wanted to promote an alternative Qatari leadership when it publicized Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al-Thani as a possible replacement for current Qatari ruler, Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani. This project reached a dead end.

Moreover, when the Qatari-Saudi conflict began in the summer of 2017, Murra and Qahtan tribal festivals - both have brethren on the Qatari side of the border - were held regularly to denounce Qatar's emir. Saudi Arabia mobilized the tribal element in its conflict with Qatar, so it feared the Qataris would do the same because Nawaf was living there.

To cut this meddling in tribal affairs, Saudi Arabia simply kidnapped Nawaf. His whereabouts have been unknown since 12 May.

■ A nascent Saudi feminist movement

Finally, this week brought news of the arrest of seven veteran women's rights activists and lawyers. In an unusual move, the pictures of the women activists were published in the Saudi print media, with titles praising the leadership for getting rid of traitors and those who crossed the red line, the sacred line of the homeland.

Activists like Aisha al-Manea, Aziza Yousif and Lujain al-Huthlul had campaigned for women's rights, lifting the ban on driving and abolishing the guardianship system. The eldest among the detained was 70 years old and the youngest is in her late 20s.

Does Mohammad bin Salman sense an unease among his loyalist Wahhabis after he allowed women to drive and go to concerts and cinemas? Does he want to appease the religious establishment and reassure them that he is on their side, as a moderate Muslim who gives women one right with one hand but takes their freedom with the other? The vague but loaded language the Saudi press utilised to justify the arrests - including references to "treason" - reflects a desire to mobilize Saudis against an imaginary foreign enemy.

As long as the Saudi conscience is manipulated to think that the kingdom is targeted by foreign devils and envied by enemies determined to undermine its security, piety, and national interest, it really doesn't matter.

Despite the different groups targeted over the last months, there are common threads that unite these arrests. MBS is determined to spread fear, eliminate dissent and intimidate tribal groups. He wishes to purge from the present any reminders of the distant past. He wants to mitigate against this past resurfacing and he is trying to bury a grassroots feminist movement before it becomes too political, demanding rights not only for women but also Saudi men. After all, who said feminism isn't political?

(Source: *Middle East Eye*)

U.S. withdrawal of JCPOA likely to result in loss of economic benefits to Iran: Jenkins

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Peter Jenkins, former UK Ambassador to the IAEA and UN says that “Politically, however, recognising that U.S. intentions post-withdrawal are likely to result in a loss of economic benefits to Iran, the Europeans, Russia and China are likely to look for as many ways as possible of compensating for that economic loss.”

Former associate fellow of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy also adds that “As long as Iran is complying with the JCPOA, the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia are deprived of any basis for claiming that Iran presents a nuclear threat which must be eliminated by the use of force.”

Following is the full text of the interview:
■ The U.S. violated the JCPOA. What are the reasons behind this unilateral revocation?

A: Reading between the lines of the statements made by President Trump on 8 May 2018, and Secretary Pompeo on 21 May, one can discern multiple motives for pulling the United States out of the JCPOA. The president wants to destroy one of President Obama's major achievements. The president is trying to please the Prime Minister of Israel, who in 2015 opposed conclusion of the JCPOA, and who has influence over certain U.S. political campaign funders.

The president may be hoping to create an opportunity for himself to demonstrate his skill as a negotiator, believing that “crippling sanctions” will lead to Iran begging for a replacement deal. It is more likely, however, that above all he wants to provoke Iran into resuming nuclear activities which can provide him with a pretext for attacking Iran militarily, in a belief, encouraged by his National Security Adviser, that this will



bring about the fall of the Islamic Republic, “regime change”.

■ In regard to Trump's violation of the Iran deal, what are the obligations and responsibilities of the deal's other signatories?

A: The president's decision neither adds to, nor subtracts from the obligations and responsibilities of the other parties. Whether the JCPOA can survive the U.S. withdrawal is a question that must be addressed politically, not legally.

The JCPOA does not provide for the termination of the deal if any of the parties chooses to withdraw. Nor does it require any of the remaining parties to compensate Iran if one party chooses to withdraw. Politically, however, recognising that U.S. intentions post-withdrawal are likely to result in a loss of economic benefits to Iran, the Europeans, Russia and China are likely to look for as

many ways as possible of compensating for that economic loss.

At this point it is hard to judge the extent to which this attempt to compensate Iran will succeed. It may be that Iran will have to reconcile itself to receiving fewer benefits than it anticipated when it signed the JCPOA in July 2015. In that context, though, one must not forget that the JCPOA offers Iran substantial political and security benefits. It is much more than an economic agreement. In particular, as long as Iran is complying with the JCPOA, the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia are deprived of any basis for claiming that Iran presents a nuclear threat which must be eliminated by the use of force.

■ In a tactful reaction to Trump's Betrayal of Nuclear Deal, Iran said the survival of JCPOA highly depends on firm European guarantees. Since the EU's leverage is not

strong enough to bring the U.S. back to reason, shall Iran count on their guarantees?

A: I agree that Europe cannot hope to bring the United States back to reason. Whether it can hope to be able to deliver the guarantees for which its Iranian partner has called depends on what that word means in this context. Europe can pledge its own commitment to the JCPOA for as long as Iran is committed. In fact, it has already done so. It can also pledge to leave no stone unturned in its search for ways of minimising the economic harm to Iran that the United States will be seeking to cause. But it will be beyond Europe's powers to ensure that Iran will be as well off as it would have been if the United States had remained a party and had complied fully with its JCPOA obligations.

■ Will EU dare to invest or have economic engagement with Iran in a situation where the U.S. nuclear related sanctions are back again and the foreign companies face U.S. penalties?

A: Some EU firms will dare to do business in and with Iran, others will not. Those that feel themselves to be vulnerable to U.S. legal restrictions on dealing with Iran, because they have U.S. business interests or executives who need to visit the United States, will hold back – unless the EU can find a way of protecting them from U.S. measures or pressuring the U.S. government into issuing waivers.

It is worth remembering that, despite widespread uncertainty in Europe since 2015 concerning U.S. intentions post-Obama, many more European firms have Iranian interests now than was the case prior to the JCPOA.

■ Returning which kind of the sanctions are red line for Iran that will endanger its national interest?

A: I, a non-Iranian, am not qualified to answer that question.

U.S. role in Yemen: what you need to know about UAE's torture prisons



TEHRAN (FNA) — The Trump administration's involvement in Saudi-led war on Yemen has already cost thousands of civilian lives and a country in ruins. The negative consequences of this illegal military occupation and torture program should cost the U.S. government more.

History has proven that the United States has deliberately become entrenched in this illegal conflict by design. America is already involved through its decades-old alliance with Saudi Arabia and through current support for the campaign in Yemen with both weapons and tactical back-up.

The U.S. has garnered some responsibility for the outcome of the terrible events there and it is incumbent on the United Nations to prevent the further breakdown of order in an already unstable region by acting quickly to curb the unnecessary bloodshed through advocacy of the peace plan and the immediate end to sales of weapons to the Saudis.

Nor is that all. The House of Representatives has just voted to force a public accounting of the current U.S. role in torture prisons across Southern Yemen. That this should be done by the United Nations – and not the U.S. – through an independent international group of investigators is beyond dispute.

What's certain is that no U.S. accounting or investigation will ever lead to holding someone to account at the Pentagon or the White House for the widespread torture program in Yemen.

As reported by Western media outlets, there is a network of 18 clandestine prisons across South Yemen that are run by the United Arab Emirates – Washington's primary ally in Yemen war – or by proxy forces controlled by the UAE. Their investigation suggests that nearly 2,000 Yemenis are in these prisons where severe torture techniques are the norm, including a “grill” in which “the victim is tied to a spit like a roast and spun in a circle of fire”.

A UN panel of experts in January largely affirmed the findings as well, and found that the UAE forces in Yemen were responsible for acts of torture that include beatings, electrocution, denial of medical treatment, and sexual violence.

The exact role that the U.S. personnel from the Defense Department or the CIA play in these interrogations is not clear, but anonymous U.S. defense officials say “that American forces do participate in interrogations of detainees at locations in Yemen, provide questions for others to ask, and receive transcripts of interrogations from Emirati allies”. They further say, “U.S. senior military leaders are aware of allegations of torture at the prisons in Yemen, look into them, but are satisfied that there had not been any abuse when U.S. forces were present.”

Under International Law, it is unacceptable for the U.S. personnel to be involved in the Saudi-led war on Yemen, much less in UAE's torture program or rely on an allied country to use torture on behalf of the U.S. This is not what the American officials say they are there for.

This is something the UN needs to put an end to. The UN should require an independent report about the findings of what role the UAE, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have in these torture prisons, and hold them to account. The UN will also pass a resolution to condemn these regimes.

For more than three years, the U.S. has been supporting the war on Yemen led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Washington's enthusiasm over the UAE's so-called counterterrorism role has led U.S. officials to turn a blind eye to much of its activity in South Yemen. The UAE is a colonizing force in the country and has supported extremist militias responsible for violence against Yemeni activists and civilians.

That said, just because the Trump administration is reluctant to discuss the U.S. role in the torture prisons doesn't make it an innocent party to this illegal program. If previous investigations and reviews in Iraq and Afghanistan by the UN and human rights organizations are any indication, the U.S. government has always permitted American personnel to use interrogation techniques as per the U.S. Army field manual on human intelligence collection, including many of the torture techniques the CIA used after 9/11.

Despite the fact that a law passed in 2015 requires the U.S. to notify the International Committee of the Red Cross about any detainee under the “effective control” of the U.S., the Trump White House has never bothered to do just that. And if it's unclear and there is no sufficient transparency about what level of control U.S. personnel have in the UAE prisons in Yemen, there is a simple explanation for it. The U.S. is directly involved in UAE's torture program, and hence complicit in UAE's crimes against humanity in Yemen.

There is plenty of evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity as well, and under the circumstances, the International Criminal Court should be dispatched to hold the belligerents accountable for their international crimes. To ensure these cases are fully investigated by the International Criminal Court, the UN should also use other tools at its disposal to help in collecting and preserving evidence of crimes committed by the U.S., Saudi Arabia and the UAE inside Yemen.

This way, the international civil society can confirm the sovereignty of Yemen, advance justice, and ensure that such widespread crimes are prosecuted, albeit with the help of an international team – and not one cherry-picked by the U.S. House of Representatives to pursue selective justice

Derrida develops political theology without sovereignty: Professor

By Jalad Heirannia

Clayton Crockett, Professor and Director of Religious Studies program at University of Central Arkansas says that “Writing is the major theme of a large number of French post-structuralists, but for Derrida and others, the location and conditions of postmodernism and deconstruction are less attached to writing and more connected to what Derrida in his later work calls an originary technicity.”

He adds that Derrida “develops a political theology without sovereignty, in contrast to the political theology of Carl Schmitt.”

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ What has been your main question in your book “Derrida after the End of Writing: Political Theology and New Materialism”?

A: My main question in this book is to address what has been called a ‘turn’ or a shift in the work of Derrida's later work in comparison with his earlier philosophy. There seems to be a more explicit engagement in questions of politics, ethics, and religion in his later writings and there have been many efforts to analyze and explain this. I argue against any explicit turn or reorientation. My claim is that as Derrida develops his philosophy into the 1980s and 1990s, there is a subtle transformation in the background context of his work and how we understand



European philosophy whereby deconstruction becomes less attached to writing.

■ What Hypothesis did you use to answer this question? What is your central argument?

A: Writing is the major theme of a large number of French poststructuralists, but for Derrida and others, the location and conditions of postmodernism and deconstruction are less attached to writing and more connected to what Derrida

in his later work calls an originary technicity. Technicity is the technics of existence that includes repetition and responsibility. This technicity as a condition of our living and thinking produces and reproduces death as its destructive result—think of our weapons—and also at the same time, life as a possibility of responding, of being responsible to any situation of life and thought. I read Derrida's later work along these lines, and suggest that he develops a political theology without sovereignty, in contrast to the political theology of Carl Schmitt.

■ What was the necessity of writing this book?

A: In Derrida after the End of Writing, I privilege three particular readers of Derrida: John D. Caputo, Catherine Malabou, and Karen Barad. Each of these important philosophers sees Derrida as a thinker of something besides writing, whether in relation to faith (Caputo), plasticity (Malabou), or quantum particle physics (Barad). My conclusion is that we should view Derrida's work from the perspective of what is called New Materialism, as a nonreductive energetic materialism that understands deconstruction in relation to the world not just of language, but events, processes, animals, politics, objects, and even quantum fields.

The necessity of writing this book was to show where and how Derrida's work remains relevant in the 21st century, beyond the stereotypical contexts of literature, linguistics, and language to which it is sometimes confined.

Turkey's presidential hopeful says he would invite Assad to Ankara

1 → ■ How would you steer Turkey-West relations after possible victory in the election?

A: Now there are two wests; one west is headed by U.S. and another west is centered in Germany, so it is impossible to talk about one west.

It seems that Germany has changed its track from that of U.S. and we can see this shift even in the regional developments. Germany does not support and follow Americans' expansionist and bullying policies in the western

Asia. Economically speaking, Germany is widening its distance from American policies while expanding economic ties with China, Iran, and India. We would consider these issues at the time that we come to power. Vatan Party is the first party in the world which has brought up the strategy and policy of Eurasia. We see the security and development of Turkey in Eurasia. U.S. is trying to push Turkey toward an economic bankruptcy and disintegration and that is why Turkey

is not going to be an ally of U.S. anymore. U.S. will have normal ties with Turkey on the condition that it respects Turkey's independence and territorial integrity. Anyway our policy will be based on Eurasian Union and West-Asian Union.

■ As you know the Syrian crisis has imposed heavy costs on the region. What strategy will you pick in regards with Syria if you win the election, considering this fact?

A: Turkey and Syria have shared interests

and future in different areas. There are good opportunities available for the two countries in diverse areas like culture, politics and economy. And that's why the first thing that we will do after victory in June 24 election is that we will invite Mr. Bashar al-Assad to Ankara and we will welcome him at the airport. We see no limitations and barriers in developing relations between Turkey and Syria and we will make our utmost efforts to materialize this objective.

Israel has accomplices in its violence against Palestinians

TEHRAN (FNA) — According to Gaza's Health Ministry, dozens of Palestinians were hurt along the border on Friday. Most of the 86 people injured during the weekly protests, called, Great March of Return, were treated for tear gas inhalation while some sustained gunshot wounds.

This should surprise no one. Over 120 Palestinians have been killed and 3,300 injured by Israeli live fire since demonstrations began March 30. Meaning more Palestinians will be killed during the next protests. This is because Israel's Supreme Court has unanimously rejected petitions brought by human rights groups demanding Israeli troops to stop using snipers and live ammunition against unarmed Palestinian protesters in the Gaza Strip.

The court's ruling gives Israel a green light to its continued use of snipers and live fire against Palestinian protesters. The court even rejected the broad factual basis presented to it by the petitioners, which includes multiple testimonies of wounded and reports of international organisations involved in documenting the killing and wounding of unarmed protesters in Gaza.

That said, there are also others which continue to give the green light to the usurper regime's disproportionate use of force, a horror that violates International Law, one being the United States which just recently opened its embassy in Jerusalem Al-Quds despite international criticism and condemnation.

Regardless of the reasons for this special relationship, American support for Israel really is quite extensive. The US has given Israel \$118 billion in aid over the years (about

\$3 billion per year nowadays). Half of all American UN Security Council vetoes blocked resolutions critical of Israel.

The Trump administration has led to renewed warmth in the Israeli-American relationship as well, culminating in his December decision to formally recognize Jerusalem Al-Quds as Israel's capital. This goes in the face of global public opinion which is generally sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, creating real concern among Israelis that an international boycott movement, called BDS, could pick up some support.

It's clear that the ongoing Israeli violence against Palestinian protesters in Gaza and the West Bank is a key cause of Israel's poor global standing. Unlike the Trump administration, most of the world believes that Israel's continued violence and control of the West Bank is an unlawful military occupation, and that illegal settlements violate the Fourth Geneva Convention.

On the other hand, the BDS movement, which coalesced in 2005, aims to capitalize on international anger with Israel. The movement's strategy is to create costs to Israel's Palestinian policy through boycotts of Israeli goods and institutions, divestment from Israeli companies, and sanctions on regime itself.

As is, BDS plans to continue boycotting Israel until 1) all of the illegal settlements are dismantled, 2) Palestinians are given equal rights inside Palestinian territories, and 3) Palestinian refugees are granted the right of return, which means to return to the land and homes they used to inhabit in what is now occupied Palestine. These are the

same demands made by the Palestinian protesters along the besieged Gaza border as well.

Having said that, if Israel is allowed to continue to expand illegal settlements, which Palestinians see as a de facto campaign to erase the Palestinian state outright, and is not grilled at the UN Security Council, that's because its special relationship with the US is still there. If the Palestinians remain politically divided between Fatah and Hamas, that's because Washington doesn't want to see any Palestinian unity along the way, much less any Palestinian right respected by Tel Aviv.

The United States and Israel have made this apartheid policy official: The two regimes signed a new 10-year military-assistance deal just recently, representing the single largest pledge of its kind in American history. The pact, laid out in a Memorandum of Understanding, is worth \$38 billion over the course of a decade, an increase of roughly 27 percent on the money pledged in the last agreement, which was signed in 2007.

So no matter how bad the relationship between the two countries' top leaders, no matter who gets elected to the White House, no matter how loudly the international outcry, and no matter how many times Israeli violence against Palestinians and American complicity in Israeli crimes against humanity is condemned at the United Nations: The United States will keep providing large sums of money and diplomatic support for Israel's apartheid regime. Tragic enough, it's a foreign-policy deal seemingly immune to international laws and accountability.

Will Trump be brought down by women, just like Italy's Berlusconi?

By Rula Jebreal

An overly tanned right-wing populist with a fervent base seemingly dodges scandal after scandal, until several women he's abused, insulted or exploited finally lead to his downfall. That scenario may sound like Donald Trump's presidency, albeit with a liberal fantasy ending. But I'm actually talking about Silvio Berlusconi, the flamboyant former Italian prime minister.

The two leaders have a lot in common. Both are wealthy demagogues with long records of bankruptcy and shady business dealings. Both are celebrities — Berlusconi once ran a TV empire, Trump had a hit reality-TV franchise. Both entered politics, claiming that only they could fix a broken political system — one from which they handsomely benefited. Both are savvy salesmen who appealed to disgruntled voters by projecting themselves — paradoxically — as cartoonish authoritarians and victimized everymen. Both became embroiled in sex scandals. Trump alleg-

edly cheated on his pregnant wife with porn star Stormy Daniels (real name Stephanie Clifford), then tried to buy her silence just before the 2016 election. Berlusconi was accused of having sex with a young prostitute at a "bunga bunga" party. Both men also saw those controversies spiral into probes about cover-ups and the abuse of power.

Most Americans — like most Italians — don't really care about their leaders' sex lives. But they do care if their leaders are corrupt. They do care if they bribe people, using fixers who also sell their access to the head of state. So Trump — and his critics — may want to study Berlusconi's demise — and how he sullied the country's democracy on his way down.

■ The fall of media mogul

The fall of the Italian media mogul began one night in October 2010 when Berlusconi — then in his 70s — allegedly gave a 17-year-old belly dancer named Karima El Mahroug 7,000 euros and some jewelry to have sex with him. The encounter may have remained secret, but months later, El Mahroug,

known as "Ruby the Heart Stealer," was arrested on charges of stealing — not hearts but thousands of euros from her roommate.

Her first call from jail was to Berlusconi. Soon, the Italian prime minister pressured the head of police in Milan to release her, claiming that the girl — a Moroccan citizen — was the niece of Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak. Her arrest, he explained, could spark a diplomatic crisis.

Law enforcement leaked the story, and the ensuing media storm included lurid tales of orgies at Berlusconi's residence in Rome, where prostitutes were hired to dress like nuns and policewomen and role-play with the prime minister. Ever the demagogue, Berlusconi responded to the scandal by declaring, "It's better to be fond of beautiful girls than to be gay."

What also came out in the scandal: The libidinous leader used a proxy — businessman Gianpaolo Tarantini — to pay other women (pr*titutes, porn stars and showgirls) to sleep with him and, later,

to allegedly keep quiet about their randy romps and lie to the magistrates.

Ruby's story ought to have come as no surprise to the Italian public: A year earlier, Berlusconi's wife of 19 years, Veronica Lario, had filed for divorce, publicly accusing her husband of "consorting with minors." She wrote an open letter to Italy's main newspaper, La Repubblica, calling the prime minister "a sick man." Members of Berlusconi's political party and his media surrogates responded by leaking seductive photos of her and spreading rumors she was sleeping with her bodyguards, among other things.

Then there was Angela Merkel. Berlusconi never slept with her, but she certainly helped lead to his downfall. The German chancellor couldn't stand his naked corruption and misogyny. (It didn't help that he also referred to her as an "unf**kable b**ch.") In normal times, the Merkel-Berlusconi beef would have been little more than a verbal spat. But it occurred in 2011, when Italy was in the throes of

a financial crisis. The country needed a European Union bailout. The result: She demanded his ouster as part of the price for Italy's economic survival. And Berlusconi was forced from power and banned from public office for more than half a decade.

In 2013, he was sentenced to four years in prison on charges of financial fraud and tax evasion, though he ultimately had to do only community service. (He remains under investigation for witness tampering related to El Mahroug and others.)

■ A similar fate for Trump

Does Trump await a similar fate? It's unclear, but there are eerie parallels between his women troubles and those of his Italian counterpart. Take Stormy Daniels. Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, paid the adult film star \$130,000 through a limited liability company just before the 2016 election to keep quiet about her alleged affair with the GOP candidate. He apparently considered it necessary so the story wouldn't leak and affect the New York real estate mogul's chances of winning. ➔

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Alan Bean, former Apollo 12 astronaut and fourth person to walk on moon, dies

Former Apollo 12 astronaut Alan Bean, who was the fourth man to walk on the moon and later turned to painting to chronicle the moon landings on canvas, has died. He was 86.



Bean was the lunar module pilot for the second moon landing mission in November 1969. He spent 31 hours on the moon during two moonwalks, deploying surface experiments with commander Charles Conrad and collecting 75 pounds of rocks and lunar soil for study back on Earth.

Bean died on Saturday in Houston, Texas, following a short illness, a Nasa statement said.

“As all great explorers are, Alan was a boundary pusher,” Nasa Administrator Jim Bridenstine said in a statement that credited Bean with being part of 11 world records in the areas of space and aeronautics. “We will remember him fondly as the great explorer who reached out to embrace the universe.”

With Bean’s passing, only four of 12 Apollo moonwalkers are still alive - Buzz Aldrin, Dave Scott, Charlie Duke and Harrison Schmitt.

Schmitt, the lunar module pilot for Apollo 17, was one of many astronauts who mourned Bean’s death and paid tribute on Saturday to his accomplishments that blazed trails for future space exploration.

“His enthusiasm about space and art never waned. Alan Bean is one of the great renaissance men of his generation - engineer, fighter pilot, astronaut and artist,” Schmitt said in a statement, adding that the wide array of lunar samples Bean helped collect from the moon was “a scientific gift that keeps on giving today and in the future.”

In 1998 Nasa oral history, Bean recalled his excitement at preparing to fly to the moon.

“When you’re getting ready to go to the moon, every day’s like Christmas and your birthday rolled into one. I mean, can you think of anything better?” Bean said.

After Apollo, Bean commanded the second crewed flight to the United States’ first space station, Skylab, in 1973. On that mission, he orbited the Earth for 59 days and travelled 24.4 million miles, setting a world record at the time.



Born March 15, 1932, in Wheeler, Texas, Bean received a Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of Texas in 1955. He attended the Navy Test Pilot School and was one of 14 trainees selected by Nasa for its third group of astronauts in October 1963.

“I’d always wanted to be a pilot, ever since I could remember,” Bean said in the 1998 Nasa oral history. “I think a lot of it just had to do with it looked exciting. It looked like brave people did that. I wanted to be brave, even though I wasn’t brave at the time. I thought maybe I could learn to be, so that appealed to me.”

Bean retired from Nasa in 1981 and devoted much of his time to creating an artistic record of space exploration.

His Apollo-themed paintings feature canvases textured with lunar boot prints and embedded with small pieces of his moon dust-stained mission patches.

“Alan Bean was the most extraordinary person I ever met,” astronaut Mike Massimino, who flew on two space shuttle missions to service the Hubble Space Telescope, said in a statement. “He was a one-of-a-kind combination of technical achievement as an astronaut and artistic achievement as a painter.”

Many fellow space explorers posted tributes to Bean on Twitter.

Retired U.S. astronaut Scott Kelly said the world had not only lost “a spaceflight pioneer ... but also an exceptional artist that brought his experience back to Earth to share with the world.” Kelly added: “Fair winds and following seas, Captain.”

U.S. astronaut Karen Nyberg called Bean a kind, gracious and humble man and a true role model.

“As a girl who grew up with passions for spaceflight and art, Alan Bean was my hero,” she wrote. “I feel fortunate to have met him.”

Retired astronaut Clayton Anderson tweeted “#RIP Alan Bean. Thank you for letting me stand upon your shoulders.”

Bean’s wife of 40 years, Leslie Bean, said in a statement that Bean died peacefully at Houston Methodist Memorial Hospital surrounded by those who loved him.

“Alan was the strongest and kindest man I ever knew,” she said. “He was the love of my life and I miss him dearly.”

He is survived by his wife, a sister and two children from a prior marriage, a daughter Amy Sue and son, Clay.

(Source: telegraph.co.uk)

New financing methods needed for entrepreneurship ecosystem: VP

TECHNOLOGY DESK **TEHRAN** — Entrepreneurship ecosystem in the country is in need of new financing methods, Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology has said.

The way of financing in a knowledge ecosystem is a very important issue, IRNA quoted Sattari as saying on Saturday.

Up to now, the finance for startups and knowledge enterprises has been provided through loans, which is a disadvantage for entrepreneurs, he added.

He said that loans provided by banks are great aid for companies with stability but it is not a good method for providing finance for an early-stage firm.

“A startup with loans from bank will destroy in case of bankruptcy. However, venture capital funds can provide it with a finance needed,” he said.



Financing is no more possible with oil-based economy, he stressed.

New methods other than bank loans are available for financing in developed countries, he said.

Venture capital (VC) is a type of private equity, a form of financing that is provided by firms or funds to small, early-stage, emerging firms that are deemed to have high growth potential, or which have demonstrated high growth (in terms of number of employees, annual revenue, or both).

Venture capital firms or funds invest in these early-stage companies in exchange for equity, or an ownership stake, in the companies they invest in. Venture capitalists take on the risk of financing risky start-ups in the hopes that some of the firms.

Iran to launch national aerospace market



TECHNOLOGY DESK **TEHRAN** — Iran will establish a national aerospace market in the near future to introduce aerospace industry products, services, technologies and software.

The market aims to support knowledge enterprises active in the field of aerospace industry and develop market for demanded products, Manuchehr Manteqi, head of the headquarters for knowledge aerospace technologies at the vice presidency for science and technology said in a press release published by IRNA on Saturday.

“We have already try to attract private sector investment and venture capital for three products in aerospace industry,” he said.

He pointed to important role of private sector as it plays an important role in managing of value chain, supply chain as well as maintenance, repair and development.

Aerospace is the human effort in science, engineering and business to fly in the atmosphere of Earth (aeronautics) and surrounding space (astronautics). Aerospace organizations research, design, manufacture, operate, or maintain aircraft or spacecraft.

Aerospace manufacturing is a high-technology industry that produces aircraft, guided missiles, space vehicles, aircraft engines, propulsion units, and related parts.

Tehran conference to discuss entrepreneurship threats, opportunities



TECHNOLOGY DESK **TEHRAN** — Tehran’s Sharif University of Technology plans to hold a conference aiming to discuss threats and opportunities of entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The conference is scheduled to be held on December 11 and 12, ISNA reported on Saturday. The event will also highlight the role of universities in development of entrepreneurship amongst students.

Individual and organizational entrepreneurship threats and opportunities in Iran, develop and boost entrepreneurship in Iranian market and financing would be some of the main themes of the conference.

An entrepreneurial ecosystem or entre-

preneurship ecosystem refers to the social and economic environment affecting the local/regional entrepreneurship.

It can also be a group of companies, including start-ups, and one or more co-ordination entities, which share similar goals and decide to form a network or organization in order to explore economies of scale combined with flexibility and entrepreneurial “drive”.

Some researchers believe governments have little effect to create an ecosystem for entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, the entrepreneurial ecosystem idea does lend itself to entrepreneurship policy, where targeted programs can be developed to plug the gaps in the ecosystem.

Debunking biggest myths about “technology addiction”

How concerned should people be about the psychological effects of screen time? Balancing technology use with other aspects of daily life seems reasonable, but there is a lot of conflicting advice about where that balance should be. Much of the discussion is framed around fighting “addiction” to technology. But to me, that resembles a moral panic, giving voice to scary claims based on weak data.

For example, in April 2018, television journalist Katie Couric’s “America Inside Out” program focused on the effects of technology on people’s brains. The episode featured the co-founder of a business treating technology addiction. That person compared addiction to technology with addictions to cocaine and other drugs. The show also implied that technology use could lead to Alzheimer’s disease-like memory loss. Others, such as psychologist Jean Twenge, have linked smartphones with teen suicide.

I am a psychologist who has worked with teens and families and conducted research on technology use, video games and addiction. I believe most of these fear-mongering claims about technology are rubbish. There are several common myths of technology addiction that deserve to be debunked by actual research.

■ Technology is not a drug

Some people have claimed that technology use activates the same pleasure centers of the brain as cocaine, heroin or methamphetamine. That’s vaguely true, but brain responses to pleasurable experiences are not reserved only for unhealthy things.

Anything fun results in an increased dopamine release in the “pleasure circuits” of the brain – whether it’s going for a swim, reading a good book, having a good conversation or eating. Technology use causes dopamine release similar to other normal, fun activities: about 50 to 100 percent above normal levels.

Cocaine, by contrast, increases dopamine 350 percent, and methamphetamine a whopping 1,200 percent. In addition, recent evidence has found significant differences in how dopamine receptors work among people whose computer use has caused problems in their daily lives, compared to substance abusers. But I believe people who claim brain responses to video games and drugs are similar are trying to liken the drip of a faucet to a waterfall.

Comparisons between technology addictions and substance abuse are also often based on brain imaging studies, which themselves have at times proven unreliable at documenting what their authors claim. Other recent imaging studies have also disproved past claims that violent games desensitized young brains, leading children to show less emotional connection with others’ suffering.



■ Technology addiction is not common

People who talk about tech addictions often express frustration with their smartphone use, or they can’t understand why kids game so much. But these aren’t real addictions, involving significant interference with other life activities such as school, work or social relationships.

My own research has suggested that 3 percent of gamers – or less – develop problem behaviors, such as neglecting schoolwork to the point that grades suffer. Most of those difficulties are mild and go away on their own over time.

■ Technology addiction is not a mental illness

At the moment, there are no official mental health diagnoses related to technology addiction. This could change: The World Health Organization has announced plans to include “gaming disorder” in the next version of its International Compendium of Diseases.

But it’s a very controversial suggestion. I am among 28 scholars who wrote to the WHO protesting that the decision was poorly informed by science. The WHO seemed to ignore research that suggested “gaming disorder” is more a symptom of other, underlying mental health issues such as depression, rather than its own disorder.

This year, the Media Psychology and Technology division of the American Psychological Association, of which I am a fellow, likewise released a statement critical of the WHO’s decision. The WHO’s sister organization, UNICEF, also argued against using “addiction” language to describe children’s screen use.

Controversies aside, I have found that current data doesn’t support technology addictions as stand-alone diagnoses. For example, there’s the Oxford study that found people who rate higher in what is called “game addiction” don’t show more psychological or health problems than others. Additional research has suggested that any problems tech-

nology overusers may experience tend to be milder than would happen with a mental illness, and usually go away on their own without treatment.

■ “Tech addiction” is not caused by technology

Most of the discussion of technology addictions suggest that technology itself is mesmerizing, harming normal brains. But my research suggests that technology addictions generally are symptoms of other, underlying disorders like depression, anxiety and attention problems. People don’t think that depressed people who sleep all day have a “bed addiction.”

This is of particular concern when considering who needs treatment, and for what conditions. Efforts to treat “technology addiction” may do little more than treat a symptom, leaving the real problem intact.

■ Technology is not uniquely addictive

There’s little question that some people overdo a wide range of activities. Those activities do include technology use, but also exercise, eating, sex, work, religion and shopping. There are even research papers on dance addiction. But few of these have official diagnoses. There’s little evidence that technology is more likely to be overused than a wide range of other enjoyable activities.

■ Technology use does not lead to suicide

Some pundits have pointed to a recent rise in suicide rates among teen girls as evidence for tech problems. But suicide rates increased for almost all age groups, particularly middle-aged adults, for the 17-year period from 1999 to 2016. This rise apparently began around 2008, during the financial collapse, and has become more pronounced since then. That undercuts the claim that screens are causing suicides in teens, as does the fact that suicide rates are far higher among middle-aged adults than youth. There appears to be a larger issue going on in society. Technopanics could be distracting regular people and health officials from identifying and treating it.

One recent paper claimed to link screen use to teen depression and suicide. But another scholar with access to the same data revealed the effect was no larger than the link between eating potatoes and suicide. This is a problem: Scholars sometimes make scary claims based on tiny data that are often statistical blips, not real effects.

To be sure, there are real problems related to technology, such as privacy issues. And people should balance technology use with other aspects of their lives. It’s also worth keeping an eye out for the very small percentage of individuals who do overuse. There’s a tiny kernel of truth to our concerns about technology addictions, but the available evidence suggests that claims of a crisis, or comparisons to substance abuse, are entirely unwarranted.

(Source: salon.com)

Mars rocks may harbor signs of life from 4b years ago, scientists find

Iron-rich rocks near ancient lake sites on Mars could hold vital clues that show life once existed there, research suggests.

These rocks -- which formed in lake beds -- are the best place to seek fossil evidence of life from billions of years ago, researchers say.

A new study that sheds light on where fossils might be preserved could aid the search for traces of tiny creatures -- known as microbes -- on Mars, which it is thought may have supported primitive life forms around four billion years ago.

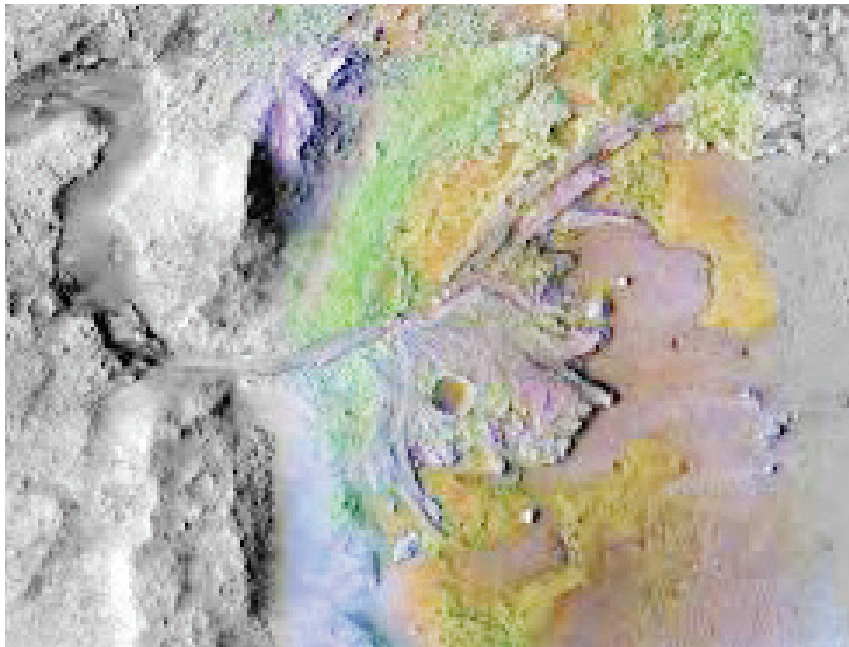
A team of scientists has determined that sedimentary rocks made of compacted mud or clay are the most likely to contain fossils. These rocks are rich in iron and a mineral called silica, which helps preserve fossils.

Planet's surface

They formed during the Noachian and Hesperian Periods of Martian history between three and four billion years ago. At that time, the planet's surface was abundant in water, which could have supported life.

The rocks are much better preserved than those of the same age on Earth, researchers say. This is because Mars is not subject to plate tectonics -- the movement of huge rocky slabs that form the crust of some planets -- which over time can destroy rocks and fossils inside them.

The team reviewed studies of fossils on Earth and assessed the results of lab ex-



The latest study of Mars rocks -- led by a researcher from the University of Edinburgh -- could aid in the selection of landing sites for both missions.

periments replicating Martian conditions to identify the most promising sites on the planet to explore for traces of ancient life.

Their findings could help inform NASA's next rover mission to the Red Planet, which will focus on searching for evidence of past life. The U.S. space agency's Mars 2020 rover will collect rock samples to be returned to Earth for analysis by a future mission.

A similar mission led by the European Space Agency is also planned in coming years.

The landing sites

The latest study of Mars rocks -- led by a researcher from the University of Edinburgh -- could aid in the selection of landing sites for both missions. It could also help to identify the best places to gather rock samples.

The study, published in *Journal of Geophysical Research*, also involved researchers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Brown University, California Institute of Technology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Yale University in the U.S.

Dr. Sean McMahon, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow in the University of Edinburgh's School of Physics and Astronomy, said: "There are many interesting rock and mineral outcrops on Mars where we would like to search for fossils, but since we can't send rovers to all of them we have tried to prioritize the most promising deposits based on the best available information."

(Source: sciencedaily.com)

Can cannabis cure cancer? Here's some evidence from an expert



For thousands of years people have used cannabis for recreational, ritualistic and medicinal purposes.

In the modern era, the latter property excites a lot of people, and there is no shortage of wild claims about the supposed medical benefits of the plant. Of all the claims, perhaps the boldest is the assertion that cannabis can cure cancer.

ASTOUNDING testimonials about cannabis and its derived products shrinking tumors or curing terminal cases are easy to find on the internet. But alluring as these stories are, they tend to be based on misunderstanding, wishful thinking or outright falsehood.

Let's start by asking what the medical efficacy might be. Contrary to what most people believe, medical uses of cannabis have been widely studied.

A 2017 review by the National Academy of Science looked at over 10,000 studies. They found evidence for some applications of cannabis, including managing chronic pain and spasms associated with multiple sclerosis.

Reducing nausea

There was also good evidence that tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis, can reduce the nausea caused by chemotherapy. Indeed, a synthetic form of THC, called dronabinol, has been prescribed for just this use for decades.

But, crucially, there is zero evidence that cannabis has any curative or even helpful impact on cancer, despite enthusiastic claims to the contrary.

Why then is there such a gulf between public perception and scientific evidence? Part of this is misunderstanding. For example, an often aired claim is that high-dose

THC kills cancer cells in a petri dish. This is true, but not very meaningful.

Killing cells in a dish is extremely easy; you can do so with anything from heat to bleach. But effective anti-cancer agents must be able to selectively kill cancer cells in the human body while sparing healthy ones.

Other cannabis advocates are driven by ideological fixation, most often expressed in a sentiment that cannabis is "natural" and implicitly better than pharmaceutical drugs.

But this is a classic example of an "appeal to nature" argument, and thus rather dubious.

The term "natural" is somewhat vague. If we define natural to mean that which occurs without human intervention, the argument still doesn't hold.

A poor strategy

Arsenic, plutonium and cyanide are also natural, yet it would be a poor strategy to binge on these substances.

The active compounds of many drugs are themselves discovered in plants, synthesized to control the dose and maximize efficacy.

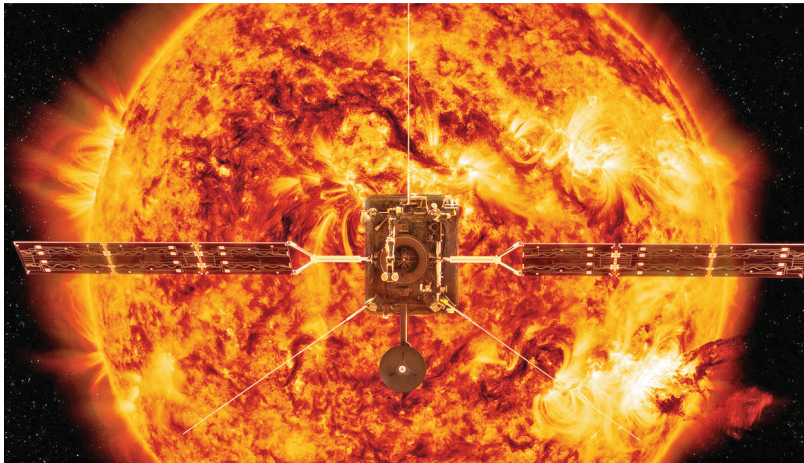
We already have THC-derived medicines, but these do not cure cancer, and neither does cannabis.

Sadly, some cannabis advocates go further, claiming that cannabis's cancer-curing abilities are covered up by drug companies. This is abject nonsense. Such a conspiracy would be massive and would rapidly collapse.

Given that around half of us will be affected by cancer in our lifetime, a cure would be not only be hugely profitable, even though the patent laws for "natural" products are complicated, it would also garner its discoverer infinite gratitude, financial rewards and scientific honors.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Two spacecraft will get closer to the sun than ever before, say scientists



Our understanding of distant stars has increased dramatically in recent decades. Thanks to improved instruments, scientists are able to see farther and clearer, thus learning more about star systems and the planets that orbit them (aka. extra-solar planets). Unfortunately, it will be some time before we develop the necessary technology to explore these stars up close.

But in the meantime, NASA and the ESA are developing missions that will allow us to explore our own Sun like never before. These missions, NASA's Parker Solar Probe and the ESA's (the European Space Agency) Solar Orbiter, will explore closer to the Sun than any previous mission. In so doing, it is hoped that they will resolve decades-old questions about the inner workings of the Sun.

These missions -- which will launch in 2018 and 2020, respectively -- will also have significant implications for life here on Earth. Not only is sunlight essential to life as we know it, solar flares can pose a major hazard for technology that humanity is becoming increasingly dependent on. This includes radio communications, satellites, power grids and human spaceflight.

And in the coming decades, Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) is expected to become increasingly crowded as commercial space stations and even space tourism become a reality. By improving our understanding of the processes that drive solar flares, we will therefore be able to better predict when they will occur and how they will impact Earth,

spacecraft, and infrastructure in LEO.

How the sun works

"Our goal is to understand how the Sun works and how it affects the space environment to the point of predictability. This is really a curiosity-driven science."

Both missions will focus on the Sun's dynamic outer atmosphere, otherwise known as the corona. At present, much of the behavior of this layer of the Sun is unpredictable and not well understood. For instance, there's the so-called "coronal heating problem", where the corona of the Sun is so much hotter than the solar surface. Then there is the question of what drives the constant outpouring of solar material (aka. solar wind) to such high speeds.

"Parker Solar Probe and Solar Orbiter employ different sorts of technology, but -- as missions -- they'll be complementary. They'll be taking pictures of the Sun's corona at the same time, and they'll be seeing some of the same structures -- what's happening at the poles of the Sun and what those same structures look like at the equator."

For its mission, the Parker Solar Probe will get closer to the Sun than any spacecraft in history -- as close as 6 million km (3.8 million mi) from the surface. This will replace the previous record of 43.432 million km (~27 million mi), which was established by the Helios B probe in 1976. From this position, the Parker Solar Probe will use its four suites of scientific instruments to image the solar wind and study the Sun's magnetic fields, plasma and energetic particles.

(Source: Universe Today)

Researchers introduce novel method to grow elastic diamonds

Diamonds is the strongest naturally occurring material on Earth. It is also renowned for its incomparable properties, such as high stiffness, exceptional thermal conductivity, high chemical resistance, and high optical transparency. Although these remarkable properties of diamond make it highly desirable for many scientific and technological applications, progress has been slow due to its brittleness.

A recent study, affiliated with UNIST has unveiled that brittle diamonds can be bent and stretched elastically when made into ultra-fine needles.

This breakthrough has been jointly conducted by Distinguished Professor Feng Ding's team from the Center for Multidimensional Carbon Materials (CMCM), within the Institute for Basic Science (IBS) at UNIST, in collaboration with an international team of researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), City University of Hong Kong, and Nanyang Technological University. The results of the study has been reported this week in the prestigious journal *Science*.

The team demonstrated that their nanoscale diamond needles could flex and stretch by as much as nine percent without breaking, then return to their original shape. Their discovery completely overturns previous theories that diamonds are brittle. Their results, the research team say, could open up unprecedented possibilities for tuning its optical, optomechanical, magnetic, phononic, and catalytic properties through elastic strain engineering.

"Ultrahigh elasticity of diamond is due to the paucity of internal defects."

Ordinary diamond in bulk form has a limit of well below one percent stretch, according to the researchers. In the study, Professor Ming's group handled the chemical calculation and the analysis of the crystal structure of diamond and ascribed that the ultrahigh elasticity of the diamond nanoneedles is due to the paucity of internal defects and the relatively smooth surface.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Sugar 3D printer could let scientists print organs

Researchers from the University of Illinois, have created a new kind of 3D printer capable of producing complex shapes from sugar that can be used to grow biological tissues.

The printer uses a process called free-form printing to create intricate structures from isomalt -- the type of sugar used to make throat lozenges -- that could not be made with traditional layer-by-layer 3D printing.

The end result is a water-soluble scaffold, which could have a variety of applications in fields such as medical research, biomedical engineering and manufacturing.

"This is a great way to create shapes around which we can pattern soft materials or grow cells and tissue, then the scaffold dissolves away," Rohit Bhargava, a professor of bioengineering and Director of the Cancer Center at Illinois, said in a statement.

"For example, one possible application is to grow tissue or study tumors in the lab. Cell cultures are usually done on flat dishes. That gives us some characteristics of the cells, but it's not a very dynamic way to look at how a system actually functions in the body. In the body, there are well-defined shapes, and shape and function are very closely related."

The device and the process of free-form isomalt printing is described in a new study published in the journal *Additive Manufacturing*. Free-form means that the nozzle essentially "draws" the substance in mid-air, with the material hardening almost immediately after it is extruded.

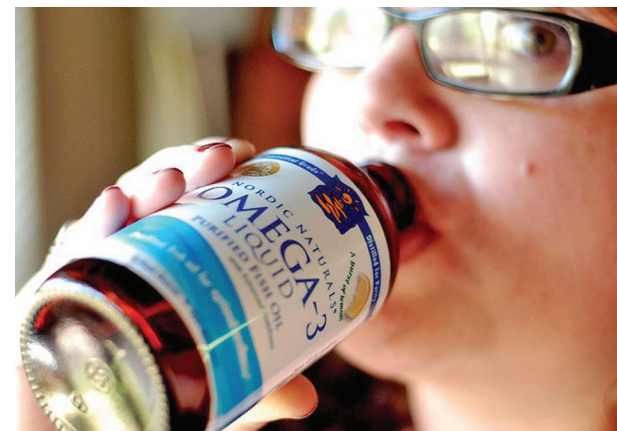
Printing with sugar based substances in this way though presents a number of challenges. Previous attempts have often had problems with the sugar burning or crystallizing. To prevent this, researchers ensured the material was maintained at a specific temperature and pressure. In addition, the diameter of the nozzle and the speed it moves was also kept stable to ensure the isomalt hardens into a relatively strong structure.

(Source: Newsweek)

Are the benefits of fish oil overrated?

Fish oil supplements are the third most popular nutritional supplement. But just how firm is the evidence to support their use?

The idea that fish oil and omega-3s are good for your heart has been nutrition orthodoxy for decades. A few dissonant voices have argued that this particular emperor has no clothes. But they have largely been drowned out by the crowd.



The American Heart Association recommends a fish oil supplement for those who don't eat the recommended two or more servings of fish per week. And that's basically everyone.

Fish oil supplements are now the third most popular nutritional supplement. There have been concerns about possible contaminants in commercial fish oil supplements, as well as the negative effects of over-fishing in order to produce enough fish oil to meet the demand.

But the presumed benefits have largely overshadowed these concerns. But just how firm is the evidence to support their use?

Epidemiological studies have found that people who eat more fish and/or take in more omega-3s have lower rates of death from cardiovascular and other diseases.

Randomized trials have established that fish oil supplements reduce inflammation and lower triglycerides. But as recently as 2010, authors of a scholarly article on "Fish oil for the Treatment of Cardiovascular Disease" conceded that the "role of omega-3 fatty acids in reducing mortality, sudden death, arrhythmias, myocardial infarction, and heart failure has not yet been established."

(Source: scientificamerican.com)

Ayandeh Bank offers 7,000b rials participation bonds of Mashhad Municipality

Selling the first package of participation bonds in the current Iranian calendar year in 1397 (started March 21, 2018), amounting to 7,000 billion rials, was completed by Ayandeh Bank as operating bank, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

7,000 billion worth of participation bond belonged to Mashhad Municipality which was sold by Ayandeh Bank as operating bank for the completion of construction operation of Phases 2 and 3 of Mashhad Urban and Suburban Railway Company.

It should be noted that participation bond is used as a common and effective method in order to finance development projects of the country. As an operating bank, Ayandeh Bank has embarked on selling these participation bonds in the selected branches of the bank

across the nationwide.

These participation bonds were offered to applicants with 20 percent on-account interest rate, exemption from taxation with three-month maturity, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank concluded.

Bank Maskan offers new loans & facilities in current year

The payable installments rate of facilities of Bank Maskan declined since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year up to the present time due to new packages of facilities offered by the bank to applicants, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

In this regard, the bank reduced interest rate of facilities out of Yekom Housing Sav-

ing Account in dilapidated and old structures in other urban areas. With the approval of Money and Credit Council (MCC) interest rate of facilities for Yekom Housing Saving Fund reduced from 9.5 to 8 percent at large. The bank also neared the interest rate of Yekom Housing Saving facilities in old structures the same as commission for Interest-Free Saving

Accounts.

The government's attempt to boom old urban structures prompted the bank to ease terms and conditions for receiving facilities in these textures.

Of the other salient measures taken by the bank, it should be referred to prolongation of repayment of facilities for purchasing housing

out of participation bonds in the old structures.

In this method, a fixed and constant figure is determined for monthly installments in the whole period.

It is natural that the monthly installments has been decreased with the increased repayment period for the facilities granted, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank concluded.

Relief foundation allots \$950m to job creation

SOCIETY desk **TEHRAN** — Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has allocated some 40 trillion rials (nearly \$950 million) to job creation for 200,000 individuals in the current Iranian calendar year (March 2018-March 2019), the foundation’s head has said.

Last year, the foundation allocated some 24 trillion rials (nearly \$570 million) for job creation for 135,000 people, IRIB quoted Parviz Fattah as saying on Sunday.



A group of women are inlaying metal objects with enamels for sale

Boosting job creation is one of the primary objectives of the foundation which will be accomplished by soliciting support from parliament and the banks, Fattah highlighted.

The Tehran province’s office of the foundation has created some 6,000 jobs and granted loans amounting to 700 billion rials (nearly \$16.5 million) to the families who are in financial distress in the province over the past Iranian calendar year.

The director general of Tehran province’s office of the foundation, Mohsen Valiee, has explained that the money was granted to the families to help them create jobs. “The sum is not very considerable but it has enabled some families to start small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).”

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation is a charitable organization, founded in March 1979, after the Islamic Revolution, to provide support for families who are struggling financially. The aim is to help such families regain financial stability.

UN Assistant High Commissioner for Protection arrives in Tehran

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Mr. Volker Türk, has arrived in Tehran on a two-day visit.

Mr Türk is the UN’s leading expert on international protection and his visit is meant to reaffirm UNHCR’s commitment to continue its strong partnership with the Islamic Republic of Iran — one of the world’s largest refugee hosting country.

While in Tehran, UNHCR’s Türk will meet high ranking officials, refugee representatives, diplomatic community and partner humanitarian agencies. He will also seek to update on progress being made around the global refugee compact. The global compact is a response to the need for the international community to come together and help countries that are particularly affected by refugee movements. A new deal for refugees will help both refugees and host communities.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has remained an important global partner on refugee protection, currently hosting around a million refugees from Afghanistan for nearly four decades.

(Source: UNHCR)

LEARN ENGLISH

Parent Teacher Conference

A: Thank you for coming tonight Mrs. Webber. As a teacher, it’s great seeing the kid’s parents assist our parent-teacher conference night.

B: Of course! I am very interested to know how my child is doing and also get some **insight** from you as to how he can improve.

A: Well Allen is a great student. He is a hard worker and very **well-behaved**, however he does **struggle** a bit with math.

B: I guess he gets that from me, I never did well in math when I was a kid. What can I do at home to **compliment** what he is learning in the classroom.

A: Well, it’s important that you sit with him and review his home-work assignments and help him with math. I would also recommend he stay after school twice a week for **tutoring** sessions. It will really help a lot.

B: Thanks a lot! I will definitely do that. Is there anything else?

A: Um.... Yes. Here is a notice from our financial department, seems your child’s **tuition** is **overdue**.

B: Oh yes, I....

■ Key Vocabulary

insight: an instance of apprehending the true nature of a thing
well-behaved: behaving in a calm polite way, and not being rude or violent

struggle: try very hard to do something that is difficult

compliment: an expression of praise

tutor: a person employed to instruct another in some branch or branches of learning, esp. a private instructor

tuition: the charge or fee for instruction

overdue: not done, paid, returned etc. by the time expected

■ Supplementary vocabulary

repeat: to go through or undergo again

excel: to surpass others or be superior in some respect or area

bully: a person who intimidates smaller or weaker people

fee: a sum paid or charged for a privilege

(Source: irlanguage.com)



European Commission committed to continue Iran-EU co-op



Iran, the official website of Iranian Energy Ministry (known as PAVEN) reported. A 12-member German delegation comprised of the managers and representatives of seven major German companies active in renewable energies area, travelled to the mentioned province for conducting the preliminary observations of the region. According to Alireza Sabouri, the managing director of North Khorasan’s Power Distribution Company, the companies would confirm the allocated lands for the projects after complementary studies are done in Germany.

Currently, due to the U.S. announcement of imposing probable sanctions, implementing the aforesaid projects may be hindered.

The British company Quercus, which was supposed to build and operate the world’s sixth

largest solar farm in Iran, expressed doubts about the future of the project responding to an email from Khabaronline about the future cooperation with Iran after the withdrawal of the United States.

Unfortunately, Quercus cannot comment on the future of the project at this time, the company said in the email.

However, in an interview with Khabaronline in published October 2017, Diego Biasi, Co-Founder and CEO of Quercus said that “As far as we understood, Iran is to stay with the nuclear deal, and as long as Iran pledges to its commitments Europeans will, as well. Although, Mr. Trump could withdraw from nuclear deal, this deal has been signed by several different groups and should be implemented by other groups”.

Nonetheless, following an e-mail sent by Khabaronline wondering about the future of environmental cooperation between Iran and Europe the European Commission has issued a statement on the continuation of environmental cooperation with Iran, as follows:

As all EU leaders recently underlined, so long as Iran continues to implement its nuclear related commitments, as it has been doing so far and has been confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency in 10 consecutive reports, the EU will remain committed to the continued full and effective implementation of the nuclear deal.

Work started last week on putting in place solutions to a number of issues deriving from the US’ announcement, in particular to mitigate the impact of US sanctions on EU companies.

The JCPOA is the culmination of 12 years of diplomacy which has been working and delivering on its main goal. The EU is determined to work with the international community to preserve it.

Just recently, Miguel Arias CAÑETE met with Vice-President Isa Kalantari, the Head of the Iranian Environment Department, during his mission to Tehran. The Commissioner re-iterated that fighting climate change is an integral part of the Iran-EU cooperation on energy.

In this regard, he welcomed Iran’s active participation on the past negotiations of the UN climate conferences. The EU believes that Iran plays a leading role in driving climate ambitions in the region. The Commissioner also invited Vice-President Kalantari to participate in the Ministerial on Climate Action organized by the Governments of Canada, China and the EU that will be celebrated in Brussels/Belgium in June this year.

Deaths related to overweight, obesity more than double in Iran

SOCIETY desk **TEHRAN** — Deaths linked with overweight and obesity have seen a twofold increase in Iran between 1990 and 2015, Reza Malekzadeh, deputy health minister, has said.

Mentioning a Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2015 study, titled “Health Effects of Overweight and Obesity in 195 Countries over 25 Years”, Malekzadeh who had also collaborated on the study explained that some 29 million Iranians are suffering overweight and obesity.

Out of 372,000 deaths occurred in 1990 some 21,500, nearly 6 percent of the deaths, were weight-related while out of 385,000 deaths in 2015 some 50,000, nearly 13 percent of the deaths, were attributed to overweight and obesity, Malekzadeh noted, IRNA reported Sunday.

In 1980 some 2 million people were obese while the number increased 5.5 times in 2015 as about 11 million people are suffering obesity, he said, adding, same goes for people who are overweight; the number jumped from 5 million to 8 million over the same time span.

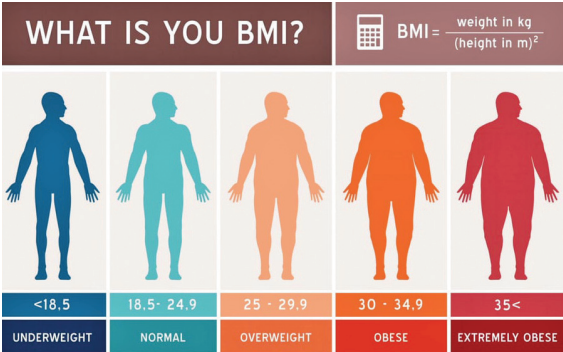
This is “terrifying” and “extremely dangerous”, he highlighted.

The range of overweight and obesity prevalence in adult males and females increased from 39.2 percent in 1980 to 53.1 percent in 2015 and the range of overweight and obesity among under-18 boys and girls grew from 6.7 percent to 13.9 over the same period, he noted.

The range of overweight and obesity prevalence in females is increasing among Iranian women, he regretted, adding that some one million Iranian need to undergo weight loss surgeries.

■ Overweight and obesity worldwide

According to World Health Organization obesity has nearly tripled since 1975 worldwide. In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, were overweight. Of



these over 650 million were obese. 39 percent of adults aged 18 years and over were overweight in 2016, and 13 percent were obese. 41 million children under the age of 5 were overweight or obese in 2016. Over 340 million children and adolescents aged 5-19 were overweight or obese in 2016, however, obesity is preventable.

■ What causes obesity and overweight?

Changes in dietary and physical activity patterns are often the result of environmental and societal changes associated with development and lack of supportive policies in sectors such as health, agriculture, transport, urban planning, environment, food processing, distribution, marketing, and education.

■ Health consequences of overweight and obesity?

Body mass index (BMI) is a simple index of weight-for-height that is commonly used to classify overweight and obesity in adults. It is defined as a person’s weight in kilograms divided by the square of his height in meters (kg/m²). Raised BMI is a major risk factor for noncommunicable

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

Mazandaran generates 3,000 tons of waste per day

Some 3,000 tons of waste is generated every day in the northern province of Mazandaran and is buried in unsanitary landfills, head of the provincial department of environment has said.

There are 27 unsanitary landfill sites in the province which are posing various threats to the region, Hosseinali Ebrahimi said, YJC reported on Friday.

The province is a tourist attraction and this is one of the underlying reasons behind high waste generation in the area, Ebrahimi explained, adding that this entails generous budget allocation in order to implement the waste management strategies and segregating waste at source.

He further criticized the municipalities that lack management skill to address the issue as waste generation has polluted rivers and forests in the area and endangered the biodiversity.

PREFIX/SUFFIX “-ish”

- **Meaning:** a word ending that indicates like, somewhat, relating to or from
- **For example:** The stone was a **greyish** color.

PHRASAL VERB Grass on

- **Meaning:** to tell the police about a criminal’s activities
- **For example:** Burton grassed on other prisoners.

IDIOM

Bring someone to heel

- **Explanation:** to force someone to behave in a disciplined manner
- **For example:** The boy had always behaved badly, but the new headmaster managed to bring him to heel.

تولید روزانه ۳ هزار تن پسماند در استان مازندران

مدیرکل محیط زیست استان مازندران گفت: روزانه حدود ۳ هزار تن پسماند در استان مازندران تولید می‌شود که متأسفانه به صورت اصولی دفن نمی‌شود.

حسینعلی ابراهیمی در گفتگو با باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان گفت: در استان حدود ۲۷ سایت دفن پسماند وجود دارد که تمام این سایت‌ها فاقد استانداردهای لازم هستند مشکلات متعددی برای این استان ایجاد کرده است

ابراهیمی گفت: استان مازندران به دلیل منطقه توریستی بودن پسماند بیشتری تولید می‌کند. وی ادامه داد: برای جمع‌آوری پسماندهای استان باید اعتبارات فراوانی اختصاص یابد تا بتوانیم مدیریت درستی در جمع‌آوری و تفکیک زباله‌ها داشته باشیم.

وی تصریح کرد: متأسفانه شهرداری‌ها و دهیاری‌ها در این موضوع کم‌کاری کرده‌اند. نبود مدیریت درست در جمع‌آوری پسماند باعث آلودگی رودخانه‌ها و جنگل‌های مازندران شده است و همچنین آلودگی زباله در جنگل‌ها و رودخانه‌ها زندگی حیات وحش را نیز به خطر انداخته است.

Saudi Arabia says 2 soldiers killed on Yemen border

Saudi Arabia says two of its troops have been killed in battle against Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah fighters on the kingdom's southern border.

The official Saudi Press Agency said the fatalities were from the "national guard" but withheld information on when or how the troops had been killed.

The agency also said the Saudi military had downed a drone near the international airport in the city of Abha, the capital of the kingdom's southwestern Asir region.

Yemen's Army said it struck the positions of Saudi-backed militants in the western Yemen province of Hajjah with a Qaher 2 ballistic missile.

Meanwhile, Yemen's al-Masirah television network published a video of the aftermath of a Saturday attack by Saudi warplanes on the capital Sana'a.

Witnesses said the attack took place just before sunset as people prepared to break the dawn-to-dusk Islamic fast of Ramadan. Four people were killed and 15 others injured in the attack that targeted a gas station, medical sources said.

The video showed a local pointing to a car, saying it was carrying a child and a woman who died in the attack.

More than 14,000 have died in the invasion, which seeks to restore Yemen's Riyadh-allied former government. The World Health Organization says upwards of 55,000 have been wounded in the war. The Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights has put the total casualty count from the military invasion



at 600,000.

More than 2,200 others have died from a cholera outbreak, which has taken hold of the county as its health infrastructure has been majorly destroyed by the invaders. Millions more are on the verge of famine amid an all-out blockade by Saudi Arabia.

Mark Lowcock, the United Nation's humanitarian affairs chief, said Thursday that "some 8.4 million people are severely food insecure and at risk of starvation" in Yemen.

"If conditions do not improve, a further 10 million people will fall into this category by the end of the year," he warned.

■ **Saudi airstrikes kill at least three people in Yemen's Sa'ada**

At least three people, including one child, have been killed in Saudi Arabia's latest airstrike on its impoverished neighbor Yemen.

The late Saturday attack was carried out on the Ghamar district of Sa'ada province.

The attack came shortly after Saudi warplanes bombed Yemen's Oil Company in the capital Sana'a, killing at least four people.

Earlier in the day, at least six Yemeni people, including three children and two women, were killed in several Saudi airstrikes on the provinces of Sa'ada, Amran and Hudaydah.

Also on Saturday, the Yemeni army said that its military drones have bombarded a Saudi airport in the kingdom's southwest-

ern province of Asir for the second time in more than a month, forcing the authorities to suspend all flights to and from the regional airport.

Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network, citing an unnamed official in the air defense unit of the army, said that Yemeni drones had targeted Abha International Airport with several airstrikes earlier in the day, inflicting damage upon it.

In the past couple of months, Yemeni army units, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees and fighters from the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement, have managed to hit different targets, either military or economic targets, in Saudi Arabia with ballistic missiles, rockets or drone attacks.

■ **Yemen: Airstrike hits gas station in Sana'a, killing four**

Meanwhile, at least four people are believed to have been killed and at least ten wounded after an airstrike allegedly carried out by the Saudi-led coalition in Sana'a, on Saturday.

According to Yemeni officials, the Saudi-led coalition launched an airstrike, targeting a gas station affiliated to a state-run oil company in Yemen's capital. Earlier in the day, eight other airstrikes were reportedly carried out in Hodeidah province, hitting the communications networks in Salif city.

The Saudi-led bombing campaign continues in Yemen with US backing, with casualty figures exceeding 16,200 people since the beginning of the conflict in March 2015.

(Source: agencies)

Israeli tank fire kills three Gazans as injured soldier dies



Israeli tank fire has killed three Palestinians east of the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, taking to 114 the number of Gazans killed in less than two months.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said the fatalities were caused on Sunday, naming two of the slain Palestinians as Hussein al-Amour, 25, and Abdul Halem al-Naqa, 28.

The ministry said the attack targeted an observation post belonging to the Palestinian resistance group, the Islamic Jihad. Israel's military alleged that the shelling was retaliation for an explosive device near Gaza's fence.

The military on Saturday announced the death of a soldier who was injured during a raid in the occupied West Bank on Thursday when Palestinians reportedly dropped a stone slab on his head from a building.

Israeli warplanes on Saturday hit what the regime called targets belonging to the Hamas resistance movement, without any report of casualties.

The fatalities have been caused by the Israeli fire since March 30, when people in the besieged coastal territory began peaceful rallies near the fence demanding the right to return to their homeland.

The largest number of fatalities on a single day came on May 14, which coincided with the 70th anniversary of Israel's creation in 1948.

The Palestinians were peacefully commemorating the Nakba (Catastrophe) Day, while also protesting the US relocation of its embassy from Tel Aviv to the holy occupied city of Jerusalem al-Quds.

(Source: Press TV)

Egypt detains prominent opposition leader, former Sisi supporter



Egyptian authorities have detained prominent opposition leader Hazim Abdel-Azim, three security sources told Reuters on Sunday, the latest development in what rights groups say is a campaign to silence government critics. Egypt has in recent weeks arrested several prominent activists in a crackdown on critics that followed small protests against hikes in metro fares. Abdel-Azim was arrested at his home in Cairo late on Saturday night on suspicion of publishing false news and inciting against the state, one source said. Once a deputy telecoms minister under ousted President Hosni Mubarak, Abdel-Azim was later heavily involved with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi's 2014 election campaign where he chaired the youth committee. He later described the experience on his Twitter profile as his "biggest sin."

The interior ministry could not immediately be reached for comment.

diately be reached for comment.

Last week, Egyptian authorities arrested award-winning blogger and journalist Wael Abbas, accusing him of involvement with an illegal organization and publishing false news.

Abbas's arrest followed those of at least three other prominent opposition figures.

Rights groups say Egypt's human and civil rights record has deteriorated under Sisi, but his supporters say his tough security policy is needed to ensure stability as Egypt recovers from years of political chaos and tackles economic challenges and an extremist insurgency. Sisi won a second term in office in a March election that featured only one other candidate - himself an ardent Sisi supporter - after all serious opposition contenders halted their campaigns citing intimidation and several arrests.

(Source: Daily Star)

Militant shelling kills Russian soldiers in Syria

The Russian Defense Ministry says four of its servicemen have lost their lives after foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants launched an attack against an artillery battery of the Syrian army in the country's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

The ministry said in a statement on Sunday that two Russian military advisers, who directed the fire of the Syrian battery, were killed on the spot, while five more sustained injuries and were taken to a Russian military hospital to receive treatment.

Two servicemen succumbed to their grave injuries shortly afterwards.

The statement added that some 43 militants were killed in the ensuing clashes, which lasted for around an hour, without saying exactly when or where the fighting occurred.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights later claimed that nine Russian soldiers alongside at least

26 Syrian army troopers had been killed in the Wednesday attack.

Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP "several groups" of militants had attacked Syrian government forces near the town of Mayadin, located about 44 kilometers southeast of the provincial capital city of Dayr al-Zawr, and that some Russian nationals were with them at the time.

A group of Russian private military contractors, who were helping Syrian and Russian forces in the drive against Takfiri terrorists in Dayr al-Zawr, were killed in early February when they came under attack by US forces.

On October 3, 2017, Russia's Defense Ministry denied that two Russian soldiers had been captured by the Daesh Takfiri terrorists in Syria.

"There have been no incidents involving the capture or losses among military servicemen of Russia's armed forces

in the province of Dayr al-Zawr or in other areas in Syria," Russia's Interfax news agency quoted a defense ministry official as saying at the time.

Captain Nikolay Afanasov was killed on July 12 last year by "sudden mortar fire on a Syrian government army camp" in Syria's western-central province of Hama.

He was part of a group of military instructors who were training Syrian soldiers.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country.

Russia has been helping Syrian forces in an ongoing battle in the province of Dayr al-Zawr as Daesh struggles to keep its last positions in eastern Syria.

(Source: agencies)

Washington-Brussels parallel talks over the JCPOA

➔ We recall that the JCPOA was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council in resolution 2231. This resolution remains the binding international legal framework for the resolution of the dispute about the Iranian nuclear program. We urge all sides to remain committed to its full implementation and to act in a spirit of responsibility.

In spite of this statement, we're witnessing that French officials don't necessarily consider it important to be "that committed" to the deal. This could point to a dangerous tactical game played by the Elysees Palace! The paradoxical positions of Macron and the French officials towards the JCPOA show that Iran can't, and shouldn't count on the support of the Elysee Palace for the nuclear deal. It should not be forgotten that between August 2017 and April 2018, there were intense negotiations between U.S. and European experts and diplomats on changing the nuclear agreement. During that time, Macron repeatedly emphasized the need to

"maintain the nuclear accord," but in practice he agreed with all the terms and conditions of the U.S. President to change the JCPOA.

The fact is that the main concern of the French President is to manage and direct the relations between Paris and Washington under the North Atlantic Treaty. In this equation, France is looking at "the JCPOA" merely as a leverage. What really matters to the French authorities is to prevent the existing "gap" between the United States and Europe from becoming a "conflict." In his recent remarks, Macron insisted that there shouldn't be a dispute between the two sides of the Atlantic (Europe and the United States) over the JCPOA and The U.S. withdrawal from it. Therefore, maintaining the nuclear deal with Iran isn't important for the French president, but it's more about managing the transatlantic relations. Subsequently, it is obvious that the JCPOA isn't actually considered an "independent variable" for France in this equation!

On the other hand, France support and

that of the European Union for the JCPOA is motivated primarily by self-interest: valuable trade with Iran. The European Union was Iran's largest trade partner before the imposition of sanctions and clearly has an interest in recovering that position. As for France, the country's trade with Iran collapsed after sanctions were imposed in 2006. When those sanctions were lifted, France-Iran trade grew 118 percent from January to October 2017, compared to the same time frame the previous year.

The fact is that Immanuel Macron, Angela Merkel and Theresa May, as the three top European politicians, have made the nuclear deal with Iran an issue for tactical bargains with the Trump government. Therefore, we could never see the European troika taking a determined position in defense of the JCPOA.

Will Washington and Europe finally bargain on the JCPOA?

Lately, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has announced that intense talks are underway between Washington and its partners

(European troika) on the nuclear deal with Iran and its fate. In other words, in spite of Washington walking out of the JCPOA, the United States and Europe continue to hold talks on it! In this equation, "Emmanuel Macron" once again plays a bold role, just like previous times. Although the French authorities have claimed that they are in talks with Iran over "maintaining the JCPOA", but they have never spoken of parallel talks with American officials, and in particular, the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. This is another indication that French officials can't be in no way trusted in this equation. Taking the French's records into consideration (especially over recent years) we come to conclude that they are well capable to deal with the United States over our interests, and they are even potentially ready to indirectly support for the thorough cancellation of the nuclear deal in the near future. Emanuel Macron was practically deceived by Trump's promises during his talks with the American authorities. And this experience can be repeated in future.

U.S. missionary home after two years behind bars in Venezuela

American missionary Josh Holt, held by Venezuela without trial on weapons charges since 2016, returned home with his wife on Saturday after the South American country's socialist government unexpectedly released them.

They were welcomed to the White House by U.S. President Donald Trump, who told Holt he had been "incredibly brave."

"It's amazing that you were able to take it ... that was a tough situation," Trump said during a televised meeting at the Oval Office with Holt's parents.

The freeing of the Mormon missionary from Utah came despite deepening U.S.-Venezuelan tensions that in the last week saw tit-for-tat expulsions of diplomats, Washington's refusal to recognize the May 20 re-election of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, and the imposition of new U.S. sanctions on Caracas.

Holt, who was arrested in June 2016 while he was in the country for his wedding to his Venezuela-born wife, said he was "overwhelmed" to be back home after two very difficult years.

"I'm just so grateful for what you guys have done, and for thinking about me, and caring about me, just a normal person," Holt said during the Oval Office meeting. "It really touches me," he said, his voice breaking.

The couple were accompanied home by U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker, who met on Friday with Maduro.

Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, who was also at the Oval Office meeting, said earlier on Saturday in a statement that Holt's release followed two years of intense lobbying, working with two presidential administrations, countless diplomatic contacts around the world, and Maduro himself.

"You better really live a good life," Hatch told Holt at the White House, drawing chuckles from Holt's family and others. In a statement, Holt's relatives gave thanks "to all who participated in this miracle."

A source familiar with the issue who asked to remain anonymous said there was no quid pro quo or agreement to ease U.S. sanctions tied to Holt's release, and that Trump was not involved in the final negotiations.

"Very glad that Josh Holt is now back home with his family - where he has always belonged," U.S. Vice President Mike Pence wrote on Twitter. "Sanctions continue until democracy returns to Venezuela."

He was echoed by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who said U.S. policy remains unchanged. "The United States stands steadfast in support of the Venezuelan people and their efforts to return to democracy," Pompeo said in a statement.

(Source: Reuters)

European large firms will ignore Iran market: Pillar

➔ Whether the benefits to Iran will be sufficient for it to stick with the agreement remains to be seen. This depends on economic patterns yet to emerge and difficult for anyone, including the Iranians, to predict.



■ Will EU dare to invest or have economic engagement with Iran in a situation where the U.S. nuclear related sanctions are back again and the foreign companies face U.S. penalties?

A: The European governments seem determined to resist the Trump administration on this issue, but there is only so much they can do to protect their private sector from secondary U.S. sanctions. Parts of the European private sector already have bowed to the U.S. pressure. For many large firms doing business in the United States, the threat of penalties or exclusion from the U.S. market is just too high a price to pay to do business with Iran.

■ Returning which kind of the sanctions are red line for Iran that will danger its national interest?

A: Iran will consider the total effect on its economy and not single out any one sector. Obviously any inability to market its oil and gas would be especially damaging.

Will Trump be brought down by women, just like Italy's Berlusconi?

➔ But as was the case with Berlusconi, the scandal soon widened beyond just sex. Daniel's lawyer, Michael Avenatti, eventually revealed, among other things, how Cohen used his access to the president to make millions from corporations such as AT&T and Novartis and investment company Columbus Nova, which is tied to Russian billionaire Viktor Vekselberg - whom the U.S. recently sanctioned.

It's still unclear if the president knew what his lawyer was doing, but here again there is a Berlusconi parallel: As Tarantini helped find women for the Italian prime minister, he was allegedly courting wealthy businessmen, promising access in exchange for considerable sums of money.

So far, Trump's response to these scandals has also mirrored Berlusconi's. Both share a profound sense of victimhood. And both have fervently attacked the press and those who could potentially bring them down (in Trump's case, law enforcement; in Berlusconi's, the Italian judiciary).

The outcome of this strategy, at least for Berlusconi, was a partial victory. By the time the Italian prime minister was forced out, he had successfully discredited and delegitimized the courts, calling them a "cancer of democracy." (Only 39 percent of Italians still believe in an independent judiciary, according to Institute Eurispes, a European think tank.) Today, his toxic legacy lives on, and many among his base - about 25 percent of the country - still believe he is innocent. Which is why, after years away from public office, he may soon run again.

(Source: Newsweek)

Injured Nick Kyrgios forced to pull out of French Open



Nick Kyrgios won't feature at this year's French Open as he is still not 100% following his elbow injury.

The 21st seed from Australia was due to face his compatriot Bernard Tomic in the first round at Roland Garros on Monday, but he has been advised it would be too risky to complete on clay.

Kyrgios suffered the injury during the Davis Cup tie against Germany in February and he has only played a handful of matches since then.

However, after winning the doubles with Jack Sock at the Lyon Open on Saturday, he was hopeful of competing at the second Grand Slam of the year.

The 23-year-old, though, confirmed on Twitter that he won't take part as his medical team "deemed it too risky for me to step out and potentially play 5 sets on clay, especially as I have not played a singles match in nearly two months".

(Source: Tennis365)

Man City close in on Riyad Mahrez deal

Manchester City are finally close to ending the long-running Riyad Mahrez saga as they prepare to complete a £75m deal for the Leicester City winger.

The Daily Mail reports that talks are ongoing and terms have not yet been finalised but it seems that Leicester will finally have to let their talisman leave after withstanding bids in each of the last two transfer windows.

Mahrez went on strike for a week after the Foxes fended off interest from City in January before returning to the fold and finishing the season on a high.

The Algerian's contract runs until 2020 but he is unlikely to sign another one and Leicester know that his value will continue to dwindle with every passing year. Given his attitude problems, they may feel that now is a sensible time to part ways.

Mahrez would add further firepower to City's existing embarrassment of attacking riches. The 106 goals they scored this season was a Premier League record but Pep Guardiola is not content to rest on his laurels as he looks to build a dominant dynasty at the Etihad Stadium.

City's main two summer targets are Mahrez and Napoli's Jorginho. With neither player involved in the World Cup this summer, Guardiola will hope to get both deals sewn up quite early.

(Source: AFP)

Emery: Neymar bossed PSG squad

New Arsenal boss Unai Emery admits he was not in control of his squad at PSG.

Emery believes Neymar only left Barcelona for Paris last summer to assume such a role because Lionel Messi was in charge at the Nou Camp.

"I know when I'm the main person responsible, and when I'm not," Emery told France Football News.

"It's a process that a coach has to live with and internalise, and that he assimilates with time and experience. In every club, you have to know what your role is and what role you have vis-a-vis the rest of the group.

"I am of the opinion that PSG's leader is Neymar. Or that he is currently becoming it. Neymar came to PSG to be the leader, to go through this process to someday become the best in the world. At Manchester City, Pep is in charge. At PSG, Neymar has to be."

(Source: Tribal Football)

Grigor Dimitrov ends Egyptian lucky loser's unexpected Paris odyssey

Grigor Dimitrov did not let a last-minute switch in opponent throw him off his stride as he subdued Egyptian lucky loser Mohamed Safwat 6-1 6-4 7-6(1) in the first round of the French Open on Sunday.

Safwat's appearance on the Philippe Chatrier arena caught a lot of people by surprise, not least the organisers who were still flagging up Dimitrov's showdown against Serbia's Viktor Troicki on the large screens around Roland Garros even as the players made their way on to court.

But with Troicki pulling out with a lower back injury, the bearded Safwat was suddenly given a platform to make his Grand Slam main draw debut at the age of 27 despite losing in the final round of qualifying.

So when exactly did Dimitrov discover that the identity of his first-round opponent had changed?

"I finished my warm-up and went to the locker room and Viktor told me 'good luck' and I was like 'what's going on?'" a bemused Dimitrov said courtside.

It was a sentiment probably shared by Safwat.

(Source: Eurosport)



Real Madrid's third successive Champions League triumph rubber-stamped their recent hegemony in European football and underlined their status as a true super club but did not confirm them as one of the all-time great teams.

Zinedine Zidane's side showcased their grit and determination to win in their 3-1 win over Liverpool in Kiev, as well as their ultra-versatile squad. Their depth in talent allowed them to bring on their most expensive player, the 100-million-euro (\$116.5 million) Gareth Bale off the bench to win the game when it was poised at 1-1.

Real's unique character, however, was displayed in the fact that moments after they had hoisted a record-extending 13th European Cup, their usual talisman Cristiano Ronaldo turned the attention back on himself, hinting in a post-match interview that he had played his final game for the club.

This was not the era-defining performance they had produced last year in the final in Cardiff, when they blew away Juventus to win 4-1. Nor could it be compared to Barcelona's sensational displays over Manchester United to win in 2009 and 2011.

Instead, the win over Jurgen Klopp's spirited yet mismatched

side will be remembered for the two catastrophic errors from Liverpool goalkeeper Loris Karius which bookended Bale's sensational overhead kick which made it 2-1 to Madrid.

The game also hinged upon Liverpool losing their influential forward Mohamed Salah to a serious shoulder injury after tangling with Madrid's Sergio Ramos, a serial winner who knows exactly what to do in the biggest games.

"Everything imaginable seemed to happen in the game but we did it in the end, and even with everything that happened we always believed in our chances of winning, even when they equalised," said Madrid coach Zidane.

"Then a player like Bale came on and did what he did."

Ronaldo's surprising statement that "it was beautiful to play for Real Madrid, I'll make an announcement soon" meant that the aftermath of a unique achievement — an unprecedented third title in a row in the Champions League era — turned into a discussion about the future of their most important player.

Match winner Bale also cast doubt on his future at Real, although before the game the Wales forward's status in the team next season was by no means certain.

Formula One aims to agree 2021 engine rules by end-June



Formula One aims to have new engine regulations for 2021 drawn up by the end of June after a meeting with teams at the Monaco Grand Prix. Commercial rights holders Liberty Media and the governing FIA sat down with teams for an update on future plans and Mercedes F1 boss Toto Wolff told reporters progress had been made in some areas.

"I think on the engine regulations we are pretty close on being able to tick the box," said the Austrian when asked what had transpired from Friday's meeting in the Mediterranean principality.

"The only major thing which we need to solve is that we are still spending a lot on engine development and what we need to avoid is double spending over the next years, continuing to develop the current engine and also doing the new one."

Wolff said concessions had been made from Mercedes' standpoint, with acceptance that the MGU-H - one of the two motor generator units on the current V6 turbo hybrid engine - would have to go.

The engines would be louder, higher-revving and less fuel-limited.

"It's not the most sustainable message we're sending out but we can understand that from a spectacle standpoint it is something you need to consider and accept," said

Wolff. Formula One announced in April it wanted to have cost caps and a more balanced distribution of revenues for the next cycle after the current team contracts and engine regulations expire at the end of 2020.

It also wants engines to be simpler and louder, addressing a grievance from many fans about the current power units.

A five point plan, outlining key initiatives, was put to teams at the Bahrain Grand Prix.

Ferrari, who receive special payments, have warned they could leave if changes go against their interests. Ferrari chairman Sergio Marchionne recently sounded a more conciliatory message, however, saying he was encouraged particularly by a "change in attitude" over the engine proposals.

"I see some commonsense on the table. It was a productive discussion," said Wolff of the latest developments. "There are still areas where we are very far away. But it is moving forward in a constructive, structured process."

Regarding cost caps, he said Liberty had recognised that there needed to be a gradual process rather than any sudden imposition.

"It needs to go over several years and it needs to consider the various structures that have been put in place and they are taking our feedback on board," said Wolff.

(Source: Euronews)

Sympathy for Karius but keeper's Anfield future in question

Liverpool goalkeeper Loris Karius has received plenty of sympathy and support following his horrendous errors in his team's Champions League final defeat to Real Madrid but his future as first choice at Anfield is surely now in doubt.

The 24-year-old German was a miserable sight at the end of the game when he collapsed to the ground and lay face down in the grass, motionless while Real celebrated their title.

Tears flowed down his face as, after receiving some consolation, he joined his team mates in front of the Liverpool supporters and held out his hands in apology.

Karius had gifted Real the lead in the 51st minute when he inexplicably threw the ball straight to Real forward Karim Benzema, who stretched out his leg and knocked it into the unguarded goal.

Then, with the score at 2-1 to Real, Karius let a long-range effort from substitute Gareth Bale through his hands as the Spanish side made sure of the win.

There was no debate over whether the keeper was to blame for those two goals but plenty of empathy for a young man whose worst moments came in his biggest game.

Former Everton and Wales international goalkeeper Neville Southall took to Twitter to express his support.

"Feel sorry for Karius but it's how you bounce back I have been there it's a dark place to be I hope he comes through it. Stay strong. Believe in yourself. Goalkeepers Union."



There were also supportive words from former Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard, who praised him for his gesture to the supporters but acknowledged he now faces a challenging period.

"No-one makes a mistake on purpose. Fair play to him for going to the fans," Gerrard said.

"I admire him for owning up and apologising. These Liverpool fans will back you when times are tough, and they'll also back you when you're on top of the world as well.

Madrid confirmed as European aristocrats but Ronaldo remarks tar victory

■ Ronaldo's regrets

Ronaldo said in a later interview that he regretted the timing of his comments although his remarks brought back instant reminders of reports that emerged days after winning the 2017 final that he wanted to leave the club.

"I spoke when I shouldn't have done but something is going to happen. It wasn't the right time, but I was honest," said Ronaldo.

Spanish newspaper Marca reported that the Portuguese's team mates were furious with him and that captain Ramos admonished the player after the game for taking the shine off the victory. Real president Florentino Perez also appeared frustrated with Ronaldo.

"Everyone has the right to say what they want but the most important thing on a day like today is the club and that we all celebrate, and because people are always talking about him (Ronaldo) and nothing happens," said Perez.

"I'm delighted that Cristiano has five Champions League wins, just like me. It's not a question of him staying or not, he has a contract with us."

(Source: Mirror)

Tearful Salah 'doubtful' for Egypt's World Cup campaign



Mohamed Salah's injury in Liverpool's Champions League final defeat is "serious" according to Jurgen Klopp, but Egypt are confident he will be fit for the World Cup.

Salah left the pitch in tears after being pulled down by Real captain Sergio Ramos in the Reds' 3-1 defeat. "It's a really serious injury," said Klopp. "He is in the hospital for an X-ray. It's either the collarbone or the shoulder itself. It doesn't look good."

But the Egyptian FA tweeted that Salah had his X-ray, showing he had a "sprain in the shoulder ligaments" and that it was "optimistic" he would be fit for the Russia tournament, which starts on 14 June.

Salah, who has scored 44 goals for the club this season, tried to carry on after the incident in the 26th minute.

However, he was forced to leave the pitch a few minutes later and was replaced by Adam Lallana. Ramos later sent Salah a message of support, posting on social media: "Sometimes football shows you its good side and others the bad. Above all we are fellow pros. Get well soon, Salah. The future awaits you."

The 25-year-old has enjoyed an excellent first season at Anfield after joining from Roma for £34m last June.

Salah was leading scorer in the Premier

League with 32 goals as Jurgen Klopp's side finished fourth in the table - the record for most goals in a 38-game season.

Liverpool had nine shots with Salah on the pitch in Kiev and none in the remainder of the first half after he was subbed off.

Real Madrid were also forced to make an early substitution after defender Dani Carvajal seemed to hurt himself while trying a backheel.

The Spaniard was also in tears as he left the pitch to be replaced by Nacho.

■ 'Egypt in tears over Salah'

Honestly, I think it's a nightmare. There are no words to describe it. There was a minute of silence after we'd seen Salah go down and then when he went down the second time, we knew it wasn't good and that he would leave the pitch.

No Egyptian wanted to see that happen, we've never had an Egyptian in the Champions League final. It's really sad - I can't find the exact words to describe it. Some people were in tears.

I hope it won't affect his World Cup chances. He's the greatest player in Egypt's history, we haven't reached the World Cup for 28 years and we're just too close for all of our dreams to be shattered.

(Source: BBC)

Ali Daei a possible replacement for Carlos Queiroz

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran Football Federation has yet to confirm that Ali Daei is a possible replacement for Carlos Queiroz at Team Melli but it's no surprise that the current Saipa coach to be named as next coach. Queiroz will not remain at the helm of the Iran national team after the conclusion of the country's involvement in the World Cup finals in Russia. The Portuguese wants to spend more time with his family. Queiroz, who has been in charge of Team Melli since April 2011, had been offered an extension to his contract by the Iranian Football Federation until January's Asian Cup finals in the United Arab Emirates. But the 65-year-old has decided to call time on his seven-year stint with the Iranians after the World Cup, where they have been drawn to take on Morocco, Spain and Portugal in Group B. The Iranian media reports suggest that Daei is a candidate to replace ex-Real Madrid coach but there has been no official confirmation on this yet. Daei, the world's all-time leading goalscorer in men's international matches, has good relations with the federation and attended the Team Melli's farewell ceremony last week. In March 2009, Daei was sacked as coach of Team Melli following poor results but he has far more experience at the moment. During his tenure as the Team Melli coach, the Iranian team managed the weakest World Cup Qualification results in their history with only one win out of five WCQ games. Afterward, Daei led Persepolis to two Hazf Cup titles and a runner-up at Iran Pro League. Despite helping Saipa to advance to the AFC Champions League after many years, it's very difficult to meet the fans' expectations because they want to win AFC Asian Cup after 40 years.



VNL: Iran lose to Japan in Asian derby

Japan claimed the Asian derby against Iran 3-1 (25-22, 30-28, 23-25, 25-23) thanks a commanding performance by Yuji Nishida in Sunday's men's 2018 Nations League clash. Nishida was on top form as he guided his team with 21 points, 2 aces and one block on his own. To edge out a solid Iranian side, Japan relied on a team performance as Masahiro Yanagida (17 points, including 3 aces), Tatsuya Fukuzawa (11 points), Akihiro Yamauchi (12 points) and Haku Ri (15 points) all managed double digits. Amir Ghafour, who was Iran's top scorer on 18 points against France on Friday, only managed to score six points against Australia. The opposite spike was on top form for this Asian derby, claiming 22 points (including 4 blocks), almost double the total of Seyed Mohammad Mousavi Eraghi (12). Both teams stood at 1-1 after the opening two days of the competition: a win over Australia and a defeat against France. In this rematch of both the 2014 Asian Games final and the 2015 Asian Championship final, Iran, however, were

the favourites, having won five of their last six encounters at world level major competitions with their Asian counterparts. Iran served first but it was Japan who claimed the first points, racing to an early 6-1 lead. With the wind in their sails, the Japanese strangely broke down and allowed Iran to claw back into the game with four straight unforced errors (12-10). And Iran proved once again they were no pushovers, pouncing on every single mistake as the lethal Ali Shafiei finally found the target (16-16). A last minute rally lifted Japan in the lead that the Ryuji Nippon never let go of as Haku Ri spiked (25-22). Japan started strong in the second set off the back of the Masahiro Yanagida-Haku Ri duo (9-6). And once the Japanese block sprung into action to preven Iran from clawing back into the game (15-14), there was nothing to prevent 1972 Olympic champs to claim the second set. Especially as Masahiro Yanagida claimed a couple aces and Lee spiked (30-28) in a tense end of the set that saw both teams fight

tooth and nails. It was more of the same in third with Japan gaining an early control and Iran clawing back (5-5). A great kill block performance from Seyed Mohammad Mousavi Eraghi helped coach Kolakovic's men leapfrog in front Japan (18-16) but not for long as they seemed rattled enough to let their Asian counterparts jumped out to a 19-18 lead. Another successful blocking streak offered Iran the third set on a silver platter (25-23). Iran had the momentum and raced in front as Amir Ghafour as instrumental once gain but Nishida, back to doing what he does well, leveled with a powerful spike at 8-8. Japan dug in their heels and, despite a strong performance from the Iranian block, claimed the fourth and final set to level (25-23). Japan now head to Goaiana (Brazil) for week 2 while Iran are going to San Juan (Argentina), hoping to do better. (Source: fivb.org)

Iran finish 7th at Asian Women's U17 Volleyball



Iran played a tough match against India before powering past the fighting rivals in thrilling four-setter 25-23 20-25 25-16 25-15 to take the 7th place at the 12th Asian Women's U17 Volleyball Championship at the Nakhon Pathom Municipality Gymnasium on Sunday. Zahra Rezaei led Iran with 18 points including 11 attacks from 42 attempts, while Elakiya M.Muthu handed India 18 points including 16 kills from 47 attempts. It was a strong comeback for Iran, which finished a disappointing 9th position at the previous episode in Chongqing, China two yeas ago. To return with an improved performance and the 7th position was very satisfactory. "India are a strong team with good players. We won the first set, but they re-

covered well to beat us in the second set. However, we started to learn mistakes from the previous set and came up with a better form to win the remaining sets. I think our team's performance in this championship is not that bad. More importantly, this is the first time that we will return from the championship with the best result ever," Iran coach Mitra Shabanian commented after the match. Iran sent their team to the Asian youth girls championship for the first time in 2008 in the Philippines, where they returned disappointed with the 11th position. Their best results in the biennial competition came in 2010 and 2017 in Malaysia and China, where they finished 9th overall. (Source:Asianvolleyball.net)

Iran's Azmoun set to breakout in Russia 2018



As the countdown to the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia starts to heat up, Sardar Azmoun could be among the Asian players that could make a name for himself next month. Touted as the heir to Ali Daei's throne, Sardar Azmoun may already be the closest known starlet. It is easy to see why, given the 23-year-old already ranks fifth in the list of Team Melli's all-time top goal scorers. His 23 goals in 31 caps means he boasts a hit rate identical to that of Daei too. Similar to Luongo, Azmoun starred for his country in the 2015 AFC Asian Cup, although Iran's relatively early elimination at the quarter-final meant he was denied the chance to prove his credentials in international football. Three years on, the Rostov striker now has the chance to show what he can do in front of a global audience. As Iran takes on Morocco, Spain and Portugal in Group B, the World Cup will feel like a home tournament for Azmoun, who has spent his entire professional career in Russia, having been snapped up by Rubin Kazan at the early age of 17 before making a single appearance in the Iran Pro League for Sepahan, the-afc.com wrote. Azmoun has already shown glimpses of his ability in the UEFA Champions League, finding the net against the likes of Atletico Madrid and Bayern Munich while playing for Rostov, and this summer could see the forward's final big display on Russian soil as interest from European clubs in his services intensifies. (Source: the-AFC)

17 ACL players called-up for the World Cup

Kuala Lumpur: As coaches announce their national team squads ahead of the 2018 FIFA World Cup, the eight AFC Champions League quarter-finalists are sending 17 players to the global event in Russia. With the final eight of the 2018 AFC Champions League decided and the draw conducted, eyes of Asian football fans turn to Russia for the FIFA World Cup, where five Asian nations will be present. Fans of AFC Champions League quarter-finalists will have one eye on their respective clubs' players looking to make a name for themselves in Russia. A total of 17 players will be representing seven of the eight finalists, testament to the growing profile of the top club competition in Asia. Qatar's Al Duhail are the only side of the eight with no representatives amongst the 736 players competing for international glory next month. **Al Duhail** The Qatari champions were handed a severe blow ahead of the 2018 AFC Champions League round of 16 after their talisman Youssef Msekni suffered an Anterior Cruciate Ligament injury in April that is set to sideline him until August. Al Duhail's loss was also Tunisia's loss as one of the nation's brightest talents will miss the World Cup, leaving Al



Duhail as the only AFC Champions League quarter-finalist with no representatives in Russia. **Esteghlal** No single side contributes as many players to Carlos Queiroz's Islamic Republic of Iran than Esteghlal. Three out of Team Melli's seven defenders come from the Tehran club; veteran Pejman Montazeri, Rouzbeh Cheshmi and Majid Hosseini. Midfielder Omid Ebrahimi rounds off the Esteghlal quartet

heading to Russia next month. **Al Sadd** The 2011 AFC Champions League winners may have a World Cup winner in their ranks in club captain Xavi, but their only player travelling to the 2018 edition is IR Iran defender Morteza Pouraliganji. **Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors** Four years ago, Jeonbuk had no players in Korea Republic's squad. Only Australia's Alex Wilkinson represented the club in Brazil.

This time around, the Taeguk Warrior's setup includes four players from the 2016 AFC Champions League winners; Kim Jin-su, Lee Yong, Lee Jae-sung and Kim Shin-wook. **Persepolis** Last year's AFC Champions League semi-finalists had four representatives in IR Iran's World Cup squad four years ago, as many as their Tehran rivals Esteghlal. But while the Blue team are supplying four players to Carlos Queiroz's squad this year, Persepolis have just two in goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand and winger Vahid Amiri. Club skipper Jalal Hosseini was a surprise exclusion by the Portuguese coach. **Samsung Suwon Bluewings** The two-time Asian champions do not have any representatives in the Korea Republic World Cup squad, instead their solitary delegate to Russia is Australian defender Matthew Jurman. **Tianjin Quanjian** The Chinese are the only quarter-finalist contributing World Cup players for two different nations. Axel Witsel has been a key member of Roberto Martinez's Belgium side, while Kwon Kuyng-won has earned a place in Korea Republic squad. (Source: the-AFC)

Spain defender Carvajal likely to miss World Cup



ESPN — Real Madrid and Spain right-back Dani Carvajal could miss the 2018 World Cup after suffering a hamstring injury in the Champions League Final. Carvajal left the field in tears just before the midway point of Madrid's 3-1 win against Liverpool on Saturday, and Marca claims the defender suffered 'a muscle injury in his right hamstring'. It would mark a third blow in for Carvajal, who missed two months of the season with a heart problem and picked up a thigh injury against Bayern Munich last month. Barcelona's Sergi Roberto is the favorite to come into La Roja's squad as a right-back reinforcement, with Arsenal's Hector Bellerin another candidate. Spain are Iran's rivals in the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Julen Lopetegui's team will face Team Melli on June 20 at the Kazan Arena in Kazan.

Zonuzi new owner of Iran's Tractor Sazi

PLDC — Tractor Sazi football club has been handed to Iranian businessman Mohammad Reza Zonuzi Motlagh. Zonuzi is an Iranian businessman, shareholder, director and owner of several manufacturing, service, banking and sport clubs in Iran. He is one of the 10 richest is Iran and owns the ATA Airlines and Tabriz Iran Khodro. Zonouzi also owns shares of Tourism Bank, Saman Bank, Gostaresh Foolad F.C. and Gostaresh Foolad Sahand F.C. and other industrial factories such as Investment Company Tabriz steel expansion, Dorpad Tabriz industrial group factories, Yaghout Tabriz industry group factories, Tavangaran Sahand Industrial Group, Tabriz Bonyan Diesel plant, and Almas Industrial Group Tabriz. Zonuzi has promised the fans to bring a well-known coach to Tractor Sazi.

Mohsen Moslaman parts way with Persepolis

PLDC — Iconic midfielder Mohsen Mosalman has parted way with Persepolis football team. Persepolis General Manager Hamidreza Garshasbi said Mosalman will leave the team. Mosalman missed his place in starting lineup in the last season after disagreement with Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic. The 27-year-old player has been linked with Isfahan-based football teams Zob Ahan and Sepahan. Farshad Ahmadzadeh and Sadegh Moharrami will leaver Persepolis for Qatar's Al Khor and Dinamo Zagreb respectively and Vahid Amiri and Kamal Kamyabinia have not extended their contracts yet. In September, FIFA banned the Iranian champion from signing any players for two transfer windows, meaning the Reds would be unable to sign any players in the summer.

Hernandez 'the perfect center-forward' at Manchester United - Giggs

Wales manager Ryan Giggs will be wary of former Manchester United teammate Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez when his side face Mexico in a friendly on Monday in the Rose Bowl. "He's a very good player, he was a great teammate for someone who liked to make goals like myself," said Giggs ahead of Wales training on Saturday. "He was the perfect center-forward because he was always in goal-scoring positions. And [he was] a great character to have in the squad. "It helped that he spoke English, so it made him settle right away and in his first season he was tremendous. We got to the Champions League final and he made a big impact and was a huge favorite at Manchester United with the players and with the fans." Giggs was asked if Hernandez can lead Mexico to success at Russia 2018 and suggested that it isn't inconceivable. "I don't see why not," stated Giggs. "There are different kinds of leaders. [There are] leaders that talk a lot, leaders with experience, leaders who lead by example and Chicharito is a good professional, obviously a very good player, so I don't see why not." The former Manchester United player was full of praise for the Mexican national team, which kicks off its World Cup campaign on June 17 against Germany. "[Mexico] is a very good team, the work ethic is massive and they never stop," said the 44-year-old. "They close you down, they don't give you a minute on the ball, so it's a great test for us against a quality team who are going to create problems for us. "Everyone [in the Mexican team] is comfortable on the ball and obviously going into the World Cup, the preparation starts now, so we are in no doubts that we're in for a tough game, but that's what I want." Wales will go into the friendly without Real Madrid's Champions League hero Gareth Bale and with a fairly inexperienced squad. (Source: ESPN)

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Brazil Anima Mundi to screen Iranian movies

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Anima Mundi Festival, a Brazilian animation platform for animated films, will be screening five movies from Iranian filmmakers. “Pet Man” by Marzieh Abrarpaydar will compete in the short film category. The animation was produced at Iran’s Documentary and Experimental Film Center.



“Roobi and Chickens” by Babak Nekooei and Behnood Nekooei

“Nobody” by Elham Toroqi, “Polychrome” by Negareh Halimi, and “Roobi and Chickens” by Babak Nekooei and Behnood Nekooei will be screened in the Short for Children section. “Mr. Deer” by Mojtaba Musavi and “The Train” by Javad Maturi have been selected for the International Panorama. The festival will be held in Rio de Janeiro from July 21 to 29 and São Paulo from August 1 to 5.

Iran, North Korea national libraries sign MOU

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** – The National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) and the Grand People’s Study House in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in Tehran to enhance bilateral cooperation.



North Korean Ambassador Kang Sam-hyon (L) and NLAI director Ashraf Borujerdi meet in Tehran.

The MOU has been inked by NLAI director Ashraf Borujerdi and North Korea Ambassador Kang Sam-hyon, the NLAI announced in a press release published on Sunday. Based on the MOU, the two parties agreed to develop academic cooperation and to expand cultural relations. They also agreed to exchange cultural delegations, while the ambassador asked NLAI director to dedicate a section at the library to offer books on North Korean studies. This is the second time Kang is visiting the library. The ambassador along with a North Korean delegation visited the library on April 17.

NEWS IN BRIEF



“Lotus” to compete in Sheffield Doc Fest

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – “Lotus”, a documentary by Mohammadreza Vatandoost, will be competing in the Sheffield Doc Fest, UK’s premier documentary festival running from June 7 to 12, the organizers have announced. The doc tells the story of an old woman who is waiting for a permit to enter an island to visit her son’s grave. Films by filmmakers from Argentina, Denmark, Norway, U.S, Mexico, France, Portugal and several other countries will also be screened at the event.

Iranian photographers win awards at Paris Salon Daguerre

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian photographers have won awards at the 11th Salon Daguerre, an exhibition that is organized by the Photoclub Paris Val-de-Bievre every year. “Lady” by Amir-Hossein Honarvar won the Médaille d’Or RPS, the Focus Photo Club, the Iranian branch of the Fédération Internationale de l’Art Photographique (FIAP), announced on Sunday. The photo shows a woman walking past a mural in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz. Parviz Nurizad won the Médaille d’Argent RPS for his “Mr. Naeb” that depicts a man standing behind a window with a cup of tea in his hand. “Jumeirah View” by Shahram Jahansuz received the Trophée



“Lady” by Amir-Hossein Honarvar won the Médaille d’Or RPS at at the 11th Salon Daguerre in Paris. The winners are scheduled to be awarded during a ceremony on June 5, and the online catalogue of the exhibition will be published on July 16.

“Stories of Majid” will be amazing for English-speaking readers: Caroline Croskery

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** – The American scholar Caroline Croskery, who is translating celebrated Iranian children’s book author Hushang Moradi Kermani’s popular book “The Stories of Majid” into English, has said that English-speaking readers will be amazed by the brilliance of the book. In an interview published by the Persian service of Tasnim on Sunday, Croskery said that all 25 stories in the collection will be translated and published in a single volume. She said that “The Stories of Majid” enjoys an exceptional storyline, which narrates a portion of Iranian culture in a most attractive way. “The Stories of Majid” tells the story of an ambitious teenage boy, Majid, who lives with his grandma Bibi in the central Iranian city of Isfahan. Iranian filmmaker Kiumars Purahmad directed a TV-series of the same title based



American scholar Caroline Croskery in an undated photo

“Sesame Street” creators sue backer of raunchy puppet film

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — The creators of “Sesame Street” have filed a lawsuit against the distributor of an upcoming raunchy Hollywood film “The Happytime Murders” to halt an advertising tagline that it claims falsely associates itself with the children’s television show. An early trailer release for the film shows Muppet-like characters engaged in coarse language, drugs and violence. Sesame Workshop alleges in the lawsuit, filed on Thursday in New York state court, that STX Productions has created confusion among the public into believing the film is connected to the show and infringing on the

“Sesame Street” trademark. “As evidenced by a parade of social media posts, emails and public comments, the ‘No Sesame. All Street.’ tagline has confused and appalled viewers because of what they believe to be a serious breach of trust,” the lawsuit alleges. In response, STX issued a statement in the name of one of the film’s characters, the attorney Fred. “STX loved the idea of working closely with Brian Henson and the Jim Henson Company to tell the untold story of the active lives of Henson puppets when they’re not performing in front of children,” the statement said. “While we’re disappointed that ‘Sesame Street’ does

not share in the fun, we are confident in our legal position,” it added. “The Happytime Murders”, scheduled for an Aug. 17 release, is directed by Brian Henson, the son of “The Muppet Show” creator Jim Henson who also helped develop the puppet characters of “Sesame Street” when it launched in 1969. The film stars comedian Melissa McCarthy as a detective who is tasked with tracking down a serial killer in a world in which puppets and humans coexist. The lawsuit also asks for punitive damages and a jury trial.

Artist Frida Kahlo’s popularity soars, but family struggles to manage legacy



Cristina Kahlo, great-niece of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, speaks during an interview with Reuters at the Frida Kahlo Museum, also known as “Casa Azul”, in Mexico City, Mexico May 21, 2018. (Reuters/Gustavo Graf)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) — A coil of dark braids. Colorful Mexican dress. And a signature unibrow. Sixty-three years after her death, Mexican artist Frida Kahlo has achieved a level of fame she never reached in her lifetime, her image emblazoned on mugs, T-shirts, and keychains. But scholars and the painter’s descendants lament she has been reduced to a set of distinctive physical features that often overshadows her actual work. The debate heated up this spring when toymaker Mattel released a Barbie in Kahlo’s image, over protests from her family. The Barbie and other merchandise do not capture Kahlo’s complex legacy as a feminist icon, a disabled woman who channeled her pain into art, scholars say. “Frida Kahlo is not a product or a brand.... Frida Kahlo is not a doll,” said photographer Cristina Kahlo, the artist’s great niece. “For us, it is important to maintain the image of Frida Kahlo as the painter that she was.” This month, a new project aims to return the focus to her art. Alphabet’s Google, working in collaboration with the Kahlo family, has dedicated a portion of its Arts and Culture app to the artist’s life and work. The search giant partnered with 33 museums to digitize Kahlo’s most famous paintings and bring new work into the public eye. The app also features rare letters, diary entries and sketches, in addition to a virtual tour of her famous blue home. The Kahlo family played an active role. U.S. artist Alexa Meade and Mexican musician Ely Guerra collaborated on a piece of “living art” honoring Kahlo, working under her great niece’s guidance. “These projects that are related to Frida from a cultural point of view, spreading her painting, works and story... are projects I like and feel comfortable participating in,” Cristina Kahlo said. The museums and cultural institutions that Google partnered with managed the rights. Google says no money changed hands. Kahlo’s husband, artist Diego Rivera, established a trust supervised by the Banco de Mexico to operate museums dedicated to the couple’s work, and the trust also oversees the copyright to the works. Kahlo’s brand and image are more contentious. In the early 2000s, one of Kahlo’s nieces, Isolda Pinedo, and her daughter, Mara Romeo, assigned rights to the Kahlo brand to a company known as the Frida Kahlo Corporation, according

Actor Morgan Freeman apologizes after accusations



Actor Morgan Freeman takes part in the opening ceremonies of the Invictus Games in Orlando Florida, U.S., May 8, 2016. (Reuters/Carlo Allegri)

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Actor Morgan Freeman said on Friday any suggestion he assaulted women or created an unsafe workplace is false and apologized to anyone he may have upset after media reported that women have accused him of inappropriate behavior or harassment. The accusations against the Oscar-winning actor are the latest in a torrent against male actors, filmmakers and agents that have roiled Hollywood since October 2017, leading in some cases to resignations and the halting of projects. On Friday, movie mogul Harvey Weinstein was charged with rape and other sex crimes. Similar accusations have also engulfed men in U.S. politics and business, and inspired a #MeToo social media movement by victims sharing their stories of sexual harassment or abuse. CNN reported on Thursday that it spoke with 16 people as part of its investigation into the 80-year-old actor, some of whom also alleged inappropriate behavior by Freeman at his production company, Revelations Entertainment. “I am devastated that 80 years of my life is at risk of being undermined, in the blink of an eye, by Thursday’s media reports,” Freeman said in a statement on Friday, a day after he initially apologized. “But I also want to be clear: I did not

create unsafe work environments. I did not assault women. I did not offer employment or advancement in exchange for sex. Any suggestion that I did so is completely false,” he added. CNN said eight people told the network they were victims of what some labeled harassment and others called inappropriate behavior by Freeman. It said eight others told the network they witnessed the actor’s alleged misconduct. CNN also said other sources denied having seen any questionable behavior by the actor, and that those sources described him as being professional on set and in the office. Freeman said he is someone who feels a need to try to make women and men feel appreciated and at ease around him. As part of that, he would often try to joke with and compliment women, in what he thought was a light-hearted and humorous way, he said. “Clearly I was not always coming across the way I intended. And that is why I apologized Thursday and will continue to apologize to anyone I might have upset, however unintentionally,” he said. Reuters was unable to independently confirm any of the allegations. Freeman, whose career has spanned 50 years and more than 100 movies, won a Oscar in 2005 as best supporting actor for his role as a former boxer in “Million Dollar Baby.”